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[HUGH'S LAST LETTER.]

MADELINE GRANT.

CHAPTER XIII.

LADY RACHEL JONES came next day, and called upon Madeline, and was very agreeable indeed, and stayed to tea, and then took Miss Grant out with her in her own brougham, and introduced her (oh, great favour!) to her own pet dressmaker.

This august person viewed Miss Grant's miserable surah with undisguised contempt, and whispered that it was not "good style at all, quite out now," and muttered the awful words, "ready made."

It was not what Madeline thought she would like or what she required, but what Lady Rachel suggested and Madame Panier approved.

"Your father, my dear," patting Maddie's hand confidentially, "met me on the stairs, and we had a few words together. I'm going to show you what we do in London, and what we wear, and who we know, and who we don't know, you country mouse!"

So the "country mouse" was endowed with half-a-dozen very fine dresses, selected entirely by Lady Rachel, tailor-made, for travelling and the moors, morning, visiting, tea, and ball.

"I only order you six, my dear," said her chaperone, cheerily, "as the season is done. These will carry you on till Christmas—that is, if you have a good maid. Madame Panier, we can only give you five days," rising.

But Madame Panier threw up eyes and hands, and gesticulated, and declared that it was "absolutely impossible."

All the same, Lady Rachel was imperious, and carried her point.

She was to be female "bear leader" to this young heiress, and she was resolved that her appearance should not disgrace her, and that the old man should be taken at his word, and made "to pay and look pleasant."

The next visit was to a milliner's, the next to a shoe shop, where the same scene was enacted.

Madeline looked on and said nothing, but made an angry mental note not to go shopping with this imperious little lady again,

Why, even the poorest had the privilege of choosing their own clothes.

Why should this little black-eyed woman, barely up to her shoulder, tyrannize over her in this way?

Simply because, my dear innocent Madeline, she has promised to "bring you out," to introduce you to society, such as your parent loveth, and to be friendly.

Besides all this, she has decided in her own mind that you will do very well, and not at all as rustic-looking as she expected; and she has made up her mind, just as she did about your cream-satin dinner dress, that you are to marry her brother. Oh, happy prospect!

Lady Rachel was Levanter's only sister, a woman of five-and-thirty, who fifteen years previously had married a very rich parvenu, plain, homely, years older than herself, for his money.

She had not a halfpenny as Lady Rachel King, and she was not particularly pretty, so she made the best available use of her title, and changed it for thirty thousand a-year and the name of Jones!



Mr. Jones liked to be announced in this fashion: "Mr. and Lady Rachel Jones," and to be asked in public places, in a loud voice, "How is your wife, Lady Rachel?"

She liked her fine house, and servants, carriages, diamonds, and gowns, and both were, to a certain extent, satisfied—at any rate, at first.

Perhaps of late years there had been a perceptible amount of disappointment. Lady Rachel went more and more into society, and drifted further and farther away from Mr. Jones and his City friends.

Mr. Jones was not required in some of her circles.

Mr. Jones was quietly given to understand that "he was an old bore," that he must not expect to be always tied to the tail of his fast, fashionable, frivolous little wife. Mr. Jones was jealous.

It was quite time that Levanter married, thought his sister. He was not improving in appearance.

He was well known in society—too well known in his own set—as a fellow with a hard head, empty pockets, and a selfish nature.

Levanter was not popular. We refrain from whispering to you how many, many times he had been refused by heiresses after heiresses.

He would not be modest, and be content with an ugly girl, or an elderly widow, or a skinny spinster, on the shady side of thirty!

No, Lord Levanter must have youth and beauty, and money to boot, and there was no bidding for his coronet in the quarters that these came from.

Prudent mammas had set a mask against his name, and where his attentions would have been welcome he turned his nose, and talked in a lofty manner about not marrying his grandmothers.

His affectionate sister had vainly marked down one or two ladies with money that she thought would possibly suit, but until now Levanter had been too difficult, and her pains had gone for nothing.

Now, oh joy! at last he had found a girl almost, as one might say, to order. Young, accomplished, lady-like, very pretty, very rich!

Lady Rachel already considered her her sister-in-law, and had mentally selected her own gown for the wedding, so far ahead do some active-minded, imaginative natures throw their mental eye.

Madame Panier's dresses eventually came home, and were all that the most fastidious could wish in fit and style, colour and cut.

Maddie spent a whole afternoon in the retirement of her own room, slowly trying on all six, one after the other, with an ever-increasing approbation.

The climax was a cream satin, made in a picturesque fashion, with a pearl girdle, and a demi train, "a dream of a dress," to quote the enraptured Josephine.

As Josephine went to the door to answer some outer question Madeline took a good long look at herself in the long mirror between the windows of her boudoir. She glanced over one shoulder sideways at her train, then over the other shoulder; then she looked full at her reflection, and said to herself, with a wistful smile,

"I wonder what he would think of me now?"

Quary: Would he endorse her own opinion, viz., that she was looking uncommonly nice?

CHAPTER XIV.

LADY RACHEL JONES and Madame Panier between them soon entirely metamorphosed the appearance of Miss Grant; and she took to her new silk-lined, elegantly-made dresses and mantles and tea-gowns with astonishing rapidity; also to her landau and pair, victoria and cobs, diamonds, French maid, and prize pony.

The latter was not a specimen of dog she-

specially admired or fancied; but her father paid a long sum for Cupid, and presented him to Madeline simply because he happened to belong to the type which was the fashion, and he looked well sitting beside her in the vacant seat in the victoria, with his black muzzle, orthodox moles, and apoplectic, staring, bull-neck eyes.

And what about Hugh Glyn during the time that his wife is revelling in all this luxury?

He has been making rapid strides on the road to recovery; he is nearly quite well. The end of his sojourn with the friendly farmer's family is now drawing perceptibly near.

He has, now and then, a letter from Maddie, as she finds means to post them with her own hands—letters full of descriptions of her new life, and her new friends, and of all the wonderful new world that has been lately opened to her view.

She, who never was at a dance excepting the two "breaking-up" parties at Mrs. Fenn's, who never was in a theatre excepting on that fatal evening, has now been living in a round of gaiety, which has been whirling faster and faster as the season has waxed.

Miss Grant has already become known, has been noted by great and competent connoisseurs of beauty.

Her carriage is pointed out in the Row, her table littered with big, square, monogrammed envelopes and cards of invitation, too numerous far to accept; and Miss Grant, "the beautiful American heiress," as she is called, has opened many doors by that potent pass-key—her pretty face, and admitted not only herself, but also her proud and happy father.

Maddie does not say all this in so many long sentences to Hugh.

She has not been afraid that he would be jealous, dear fellow—oh! no; but she feels that there is a certain incongruity between his circumstances and her just at present, and she will not enlarge on her successes—quite absolutely needless.

Yet a word drops out here and slips in there, and tells Hugh far more than she intends or imagines.

Besides this, Hugh is clever. He can draw inferences—he can put two and two together—and in the long August evenings, as he sits alone at the fields along, he has a great deal of time for thinking, and these are not very happy times for Hugh Glyn.

Now and then he ventures to write to No. 2, Sofianno—terrace, and Mrs. Kane kindly encloses his epistles in an envelope and directs it, in a most unsmiling hand, "to Miss Grant, 205, Regent's Park."

And Miss Grant eagerly snatches the letter from under the pile of nicely-written on big envelopes, plunges it into her pocket, and reads it greedily alone.

For although she is a little bit carried away by admiration, money, and power, yet a letter from Hugh puts all other pleasures completely into the shade (as yet).

This is his last that she holds in her hand, written after a long evening's meditation, and with many a pause between the sentences:

"Holt Hill Farm.

"MY DEAREST MADDIE,—

"Your welcome letter is at present lying before me, and now that the whole household are asleep, and that there is not a stir on the premises, nor a sound except the loud ticking of the kitchen clock, I sit down to write to you without fear of being disturbed; for this, my dear Maddie, is going to be a very important epistle.

"I am truly glad to hear that you are so happy—that your father shows that he has an affection for you; and that you and he are no longer strangers, but getting on extremely well.

"I hope that his tenderness will be able to survive the news you have to tell him, and must tell him soon, viz., that you are married.

"I can quite understand how you are dreading the evil moment, and can enter into your feelings of shrinking reluctance to dispel this beautiful new life—this kind of enchanted existence; with just one word, and that word to be uttered by your own lips.

"But if you are averse to mentioning this one fact, that must come to light sooner or later, let me take the commission on myself. I will speak to your father. I will bear the brunt of his disappointment and indignation. After all, we have nothing to be ashamed of. If I had known that you were the heiress of a millionaire—I never would have ventured to marry you, of that you may be sure. But under other circumstances it was different.

"In the days when you had neither father nor home I offered you mine, such as it was. There was no disparity between our two lots in life such as has yawned between us since. Maddie, you will have to choose between your father and me—between riches and poverty.

"If your father will not listen to the idea of your having already changed your name, you must let me testify to the fact, and if he shuts his doors on you afterwards, you are no worse off than you were a year ago.

"If I thought you would ever have such a terrible fight to live as you had last spring I would not be so wicked as to wish you to leave your present luxurious home for my humble roof.

"But things look brighter. I am, thank Heaven, now restored to health. I have been "remembered." I have an immediate prospect of employment. Our dark days are, I trust, a thing of the past. I am going to set to work again next week. I cannot endure the idea of living here in idleness and on your father's money; for although the whole of our stay here has cost less than you say he has given for a dog, still it is his money all the same—money for your education—money diverted from its original use—money expended on a fraud. Let us be open and above board and honest, and have no more of this secrecy and double-dealing, and now that we have once more got a foothold in life and on the means of living, I believe I shall be able to scramble up the ladder.

"I wish I could give you a fourth of the luxuries you have now surrounding you. I would pawn years to get it. But if I cannot endow you with diamonds and carriages and dress, I can give you what money cannot buy. Maddie, an untried heart, that loves you with every pulse of its existence.

"Now I have said my say, I only want a line from you to go at once to London and lay bare the whole of the secret to your father. It is the right thing to do. You cannot go on living this double life, and your real home is with your husband and child.

"It is two months now since you drove away down the thaline that evening with Farmer Holt—two long, long months to me, Maddie. You have had plenty of time now to make an inroad on your father's heart. You can do a great deal in that way in less than two months; and if he is what you say he will not be impulsive when he hears that you no longer bear his name, but have changed it for another nearly two years ago.

"You say he thinks so much of good blood and family. At least in this respect the Glyns should please him. He will find out all about us in Burke.

"We were barons of the twelfth century, and there is still a title in the family. The candle is going out, and I must say good-night, but I could go on writing to you for another hour.

"The text of my discourse, if not sufficiently plain already, is, 'let me tell your father of our marriage.' One line—one word—will bring me at once to town—I am,

"Your loving husband,

"Hugh Glyn."

Maddie read this letter over very slowly, with rapidly changing colour.

Some sentences she perused two or three times, and when she came to the last word she recommenced at the beginning, then she folded it up, put it in its envelope, and thrust it into her dressing-case and turned the key.

She was a good deal disturbed; you could see it by her face as she went and stood in the window playing with her watch-chain, with a frown upon her brow and a heightened colour in her cheeks.

How impatient Hugh was! Why could he not give her time? Six weeks was nothing to prepare paper.

Then her eyes slowly travelled round the luxurious apartment, with its pale blue silk hangings, laid-in satin-wood furniture and Persian carpet, her dressing-table loaded with silver toilet-necessaries, a huge silver-framed mirror, draped in real lace of immense value, silver-backed brushes, great cases of scent; and she thought, with a shudder, of the poor little room at No. 2, with its rickety table, shilling glass, and jing without a handle.

She walked over to her dressing-table and took a long, deliberate look at herself in this magnificent mirror.

How different she looked to poor, haggard, shabby Mrs. Glyn—the slave of a sick husband and a screaming baby, with all the cares of a home on her young shoulders, with no money in her pocket, no hope in her heart, no friends, no future.

Here she beheld Miss Grant, radiant with health and beauty, her glossy hair exquisitely arranged by her deft-fingered Josephine, her pretty, slim figure shown off to its greatest advantage by a simply made, but artistically cut, thirty-quins gown, lace ruffles at her neck and wrists, diamond rings on her fingers, diamond solitaire earrings in her ears!

She had just risen from a most dainty little luncheon, where she was served by three powdered footmen, and the bishop butler. Her carriage, even now, stood waiting at her door, with its haughty-looking, champing, six-hundred guinea horses.

She was about to call for an earl's daughter, who was to chaperone her to a dinner-party, where from previous experience she knew full well that many and many a head would be turned to look after the beautiful Miss Grant—and shallied to be admired!

And Hugh wanted her to give up all this—to rend the veil from her secret, and stand before the world once more shabby, faded, insignificant Mrs. Glyn, the wife of a penniless barrister.

She was very, very fond of Hugh. "Oh (to her own conscience) do not think that I can change to him; but oh! the contrast is so awful between that other life and this. He must give me a little more time. He must!—he must!" she reiterated, passionately, to her beautiful reflection in the glass. "Once papa knows, I shall be thrust out into outer darkness, I know I shall."

And this was the girl who two months previously, bad eaten dry bread, had pawned her clothes for her husband's necessities, had walked miles to save twopence!

Sudden tinges are a great trial of the moral fibre, especially when they raise a girl of nineteen at one bound from poverty, bordering on starvation, to be the mistress of unbounded wealth, and the daughter, the only child, and heiress of a lavish, open-handed millionaire, with thousands as plentiful with her now as coppers once had been.

"I will go down and see him, that's what I shall do," she murmured, as she rang her bedroom bell, preparatory to putting herself in the hands of Josephine.

"Letters are so stupid. I will take the first chance I can get when papa is absent, and run down to the Holts for an hour or two, and tell him that he must wait, he must be patient."

And so he was very patient, as day after day he waylaid the postman, who seldom had occasion to come up to the farm, and still there was no letter.

Madelaine was daily intending to rush down

to the farm, and day followed day without her having the courage to carry out her purpose, and still Hugh waited—waited with more than masculine patience; and then he began to think that she must be ill. A whole week and no letter. He would go to town and inquire. Yes, no sooner thought than done. Fear and uneasiness now took the place of any other feeling; and hurriedly making a change in his clothes, and leaving a message for Farmer Holt, he started off to the station on foot, and took a third-class return to London.

Once there he made his way, and a long way it was, to the fashionable precincts of Belgrave-square.

It was a very hot afternoon—the very pavement, grilling, the air oppressive. People were beginning to talk of Cowes and Scotland.

Still, many gay equipages were daubing about fashionable quarters containing society notabilities and brilliant parasols. One of these swept round a corner, just as Hugh was about to cross a street. He had only a fleeting glimpse as it flashed by.

A landau and pair of bay "steppers," with what is called "extravagant" action, powdered servants, two ladies in light, summery-looking dresses, and bonnets to match, and a young man in lavender glorios on the back seat.

One of the ladies had a look of Madeline, but it somehow could not be her. This was a languid London beauty, half reclining under a large lace parasol, who looked as if she had been accustomed to such an equipage from the days of her perambulator.

It was only a passing idea, and quickly dismissed by Hugh, as he once more walked rapidly on.

At length he came near the house, to the same side of the square, within three numbers now. His heart beat rather fast, and he glanced up. None of the upper blinds were pulled down, he observed, with a sense of relief, and then he took in the dimensions of this palatial mansion, with a porch and pillars, conservatory, billiard-rooms, and buildings built out here and there wherever they could be crammed.

The awnings were up—grey red and white striped ones. Banks of flowers bloomed in the windows. Oh! what a contrast to No. 2, Solferino-terrace. Would not Madeline see it, too? he asked himself, with a pang.

After a moment's hesitation he rang the bell, and almost instantly the door was opened by a tall, supercilious-looking Jeames.

"Is—is—Miss Grant at home?" stammered her husband, with heightened colour.

"Not at home," said the footman, in a parrot voice, holding out his hand for the card that he presumed would be forthcoming.

"Is she quite well?" ventured the visitor.

"Quite well, sir, thank you," having studied the visitor, and come to the conclusion that he was "not one of your nobodies" (like his worthy master).

"Who shall I say called?" he asked, confidentially.

"It is of no consequence," muttered Hugh. "I have forgotten my card-case," turning as he spoke, and slowly descending the steps.

This was a rum proceeding in Jeames's eyes. He might at least have left his name. But no. Jeames stood in the doorway for a moment or two looking after him as he walked slowly away. Then he glanced sleepily round the big, hot-looking square, yawned, and went in to study the paper and the latest betting on Goodwood.

Hugh made his way to Mr. Jessop's chambers, and found that gentleman very busy and, as he said to himself, "up to his ears." He, however, "knocked off" for the time being to have a smoke and a chat with his old friend, whom he declared that he found looking as fit as a fiddler, and requested to know when he was going to put his shoulder to the wheel again.

"Lots for you to do, my boy! Martin has married an heiress and cut the concern. My

sister has married a son of old Bagg, of the great firm of Bagg and Keppel, and my fortune is made, and of course I'll give you a hand. There's that case of 'Craufurd and Cox' coming on next week."

Hugh did not clutch at these agreeable openings. He puffed away moodily at his cigar, and looked out of the window in a rather abstracted fashion. His keen-eyed friend noted this, and said in quite another tone,—"And what about Mrs. Glyn?"

His companion looked at him quickly and coloured faintly, knocked the end off his cigar, and said nothing.

"She has not told the old gentleman yet?"

"No."

"I know that I saw her at the opera last night, the cynosure of all eyes, with her proud and happy father noting with delight that half the opera glasses in the house were fixed on Miss Grant. Ahem! How long is it to go on—with this little comedy—eh?"

"I can't tell you," impatiently—"not another hour, as far as I am concerned. I don't wish her to sail under false colours any longer; I came up to see her to-day—"

"The deuce you did!" in blunt amazement.

"But she was out."

"I suppose you saw the house and the style, eh? By Jove! it's like Royalty. I dined there last week."

"You did?" in a tone of unfeigned astonishment.

"Yes, your humble servant. I've met Mr. Grant at my club—he knows a friend of mine, and all that. The dinner was a banquet. I had the honour of being presented to Miss Grant—of course I never saw her before"—winking at his friend—"and I declare I scarcely knew her. Dress and diamonds and manner—manner begot of importance, appreciation, wealth, and good surroundings—not that Mrs. Glyn's manners were not always those of a perfect gentlewoman—but there's a difference in doing the honours of a red bunting in an attic, and of being hostess in Belgrave-square, and presiding over a French dinner, real silver plate, and the entertainments of lords and ladies, and bishops and ambassadors, eh? and doing it well, too. But wherever she got her good blood, Hugh, it was not on her father's side. I sometimes felt inclined to run my fork into him, or choke him with the table-cloth. He is so blatantly proud of his success, his money, his grand acquaintances, and, above all, his daughter. He is, excuse me, a little cad."

"You think he will be furious when he hears that he has a son-in-law?" asked Hugh, gravely.

"If you were a lord, or had some handle to your name—"

"But as I have nothing—not even Q.C.?"

"I think, from what I know of him, he will be unpleasant, my dear fellow—very unpleasant."

"And will turn Madeline out-of-doors as the first shape his unpleasantness will take?"

"Yes, most probably."

"Well, she has her own home, at any rate. I shall set to work on Monday. I'll go round to my chambers now, and put everything in train. You can send me in those papers, and tell Tom, the clerk, I am coming back for good. I shall take lodgings, as soon as I have looked round, in a more cheerful neighbourhood than Solferino-terrace. Mrs. Holt will keep the child till we are settled."

"You mean you and—and Mrs. Glyn?" looking curiously at his companion.

"Yes; who else should I mean?"

"Does she say anything about coming back?"

"No—o; but it's understood."

Here ensued a short silence, during which Mr. Jessop was nervously to speak his mind to his friend—to speak for his good, an unthankful task, but he told himself it was his duty.

"Hugh, old chap, you and I've been friends since we were in jackets at Harrow, and I've

been your sworn ally since the day that you licked big Thompson for pitching into me. We've always stuck together somehow ever since, and I think a great deal of your concerns, and what hurts you hurts me—I must say one word to prepare you, old man," suddenly laying his hand on his companion's shoulder. "It is bad to be sanguine about things in this life. Don't—don't be too sure that she wants to come back."

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN Miss Grant returned from her drive (down to a well-known cricket-ground), where she had been surrounded with admirers like flies round a pot of honey, and had reclined very much at her ease in her landau, whilst the most excellent *partis* were outvying each other in endeavouring to win a way to her good graces, one brought her tea, another ices, another strawberries; one held her parasol, another fanned her, and Lady Rachel (who had her own diversions) looked on, and said to herself "That Madeline was becoming too much ran after, and Levant would have to mind what he was about."

Meanwhile, from a distance, Mr. Grant looked and bugged himself with joy, as he saw a baronet, a lord, and finally a marquis hanging round Madeline in turn. It was just as it should be! Then he went up to Levant, and said,—

"I say, Levant, wasn't that the Duke of Monmouth I saw you talking to just now, old chap—man with a white hat and reddish face?"

"Yes, I—I believe so," shrinking from what he knew was to follow—as per usual.

"Then, just when you get an opening, introduce me, there's a good fellow. Watch him when he comes out of the tent, eh? I'll do as much for you in another way."

This was understood; this meant a loan of some considerable sum, to be repaid at his lordship's own convenience (which would be never), and in this way Mr. Grant had made use of Levant, and actually bought introduction after introduction, accompanying him to all places of popular resort, up on race-stands, into cricket-tents, and establishing himself on Levant's shoulders as a veritable "old man of the sea," who would not and could not be shaken off, and who, through his own partnership and with the help of his cheque book, had more big names among his acquaintance, such as it was—a host—than many people who were far his social superiors. His talk was chiefly of the aristocracy, and of "My friend the Marquis of Clavering," "My intimate friend, Lord Collingford," "My neighbour, the Duke of Dublin." The peerage was his craze.

People were a good deal surprised at first, when this dapper, smartly dressed, keen-eyed little man was presented to them, and he bowed and talked, and talked and bowed, and "hoped your lordship was this, and your grace approved of that?" What was he? Who was he? What confounded impudence! What was Levant about? He was always dining a scrubby lot, but why thrust his seedy friends on them? What the deuce, &c., &c.

However, it soon came to be hinted abroad that the little man Grant was a millionaire—ridiculously rich—a second "Monte Christo," with as great a spirit of generosity as marked that nobleman, and the parent of a lovely daughter, sole heiress of his heart and home.

So Mr. Grant was no longer stared at or snubbed; he was received, he was encouraged to spend money, he was by no means a bad sort of fellow. And he was inordinately happy, excellent, and triumphant—he literally lived on air these summer days; and if Madeline, as she bid fair to do, married among his friends, he would endow her with a fortune that would open their lazy-looking eyes, and he would have put the coping-stone on the summit of his ambition, and few people accomplish that.

"A gentleman calling to see her?" said

Madeline, languidly, as she took off her gloves on the threshold of the morning room. "Did he leave his card?"

"No, ma'am, he did not—said he had forgotten it."

"And asked for me, not for Mr. Grant?" she continued, indifferently; glancing, as she spoke, at her parent, who was rapidly turning over a pile of notes, and picking out those emblazoned with a coronet.

"I'll tell you who it was," he broke in, "Lord Maltravers, come about the macaw he promised you, that's it."

"No, sir," put in Jeames, firmly, but respectfully, "it was no gentleman as I ever saw before—certainly not Lord Maltravers, though he might be a lord, for all I can say to the contrary."

"It wasn't a tradesman, eh?"

"No, sir," emphatically.

"What was he like?" inquired Madeline, opening a letter very deliberately as she spoke; her thoughts very far from Hugh.

"Well, ma'am, he looked quite a gentleman; he was about my 'ight' (complacently), very dark eyes; what you'd consider a 'ansome young man. He carried a queer-looking cane with an ivory top, and he looked disappointed as you were not at home."

"A queer-looking cane with an ivory top, and he looked disappointed;" the letter flattened out of Madeline's hands and fell to the ground, as the unconscious Jeames thus informed her that her husband had been calling that afternoon. She was glad enough to stoop quickly and hide her face, with its sudden rush of colour.

Hugh had then come up to see her. What insane rashness—what madness!

"Well!" exclaimed her father, looking at her sharply, "have you made out your mysterious visitor, eh—eh—eh?"

"I think he must have been one of my school-fellows' brothers, from the description," said Madeline, with wonderful composure, now tearing open another letter as she spoke.

"Humph," said Mr. Grant, in a tone that showed that schoolfellow's brothers were not at all in his line.

"Here's an invitation to Lord Carbuncle's for Thursday," said his daughter, rapidly turning the current of his thoughts into a much less dangerous channel, and holding out the note for his perusal.

"Thursday—Thursday. Let's see, eh?—what's for Thursday?"

"We dine with the Wilson-Jones's, in Port-lan-square."

"Oh! dear me, yes," querulously, "so we do. Can't we throw 'em over? What a nuisance," in a tone of exasperation.

But his daughter gave him no encouragement, knowing full well the enormity of throwing people over when a better engagement presented itself, and that such proceedings were not endured by people in "good society;" so Mr. Grant, who was cheered by another coroneted invitation, had to submit to fate with the best grace he could muster.

* * * * *

Next morning Madeline resolved upon a bold step on her own part. Her father was going to attend a small but aristocratic race-meeting, and she announced that she was going to spend a long and happy day in the country with some worthy old people whom she had known a good while, and who were not in papa's line; and immediately after she had seen her parent safely off the premises she went upstairs and dressed herself very plainly, put a black veil in her pocket, also a well-filled purse, and set off for Waterloo Station in a hansom. This time she travelled first-class, of course, and hired a fly to take her to the farm, at least to the lane near the farm. Mr. Holt would drive her back, and she wished to give them all an agreeable surprise.

Mrs. Holt, who was shelling peas in the kitchen in a yellow bowl, gave a little scream when she beheld Madeline standing on the threshold between her and the sunshine, and

upsetting half the pods rushed at her hospitably, wiping her hands in her blue apron, and assuring her that she was "as welcome as the flowers in May. Baby was well and growing beautiful, but Mr. Glyn was out. He and the farmer had gone off after breakfast together, she could not say when they would be in." Her square brow knit with sensible disappointment when Mrs. Glyn, in answer to her eager queries, informed her that she was not come "to stay;" that, in fact, she was going to Scotland the day after to-morrow with her father and a number of friends.

"Aye! dear me," exclaimed Mrs. Holt, after a long pause, "and what will Mr. Glyn say to that? I'm thinking he will not be for letting you go," she added dubiously.

It was just this very subject Madeline had come to discuss with him, and now he was away for the day—so very tiresome and vexing.

Mrs. Kane had been won over with money Miss Peen with valuable presents, and the hint of an invitation; there remained only Hugh to deal with. He must learn to be patient, and to wait for the auspicious moment, when, having gained the whole of her father's affection and confidence—when he began to feel that she was necessary to his well-being, his happiness, his social success, and that he could not ever spare her—then, and not till then, she would throw herself into his arms and confess to him that she was married to Hugh Glyn; and Hugh and the baby would be brought to Belgrave-square in triumph, and share her lot in basking in the sunshine of wealth and prosperity. This was Madeline's neatly-planned little programme, and meanwhile she repeated to herself ten times a-day "Hugh must wait."

She nursed the baby and praised its rosy cheeks, and asked many questions about her husband; but Mrs. Holt remarked that she took no interest in the chickens, the calves, or the dogs, nor in what she once found so delightful—the garden or the dairy.

Mrs. Holt's quick woman's eye did not fail to notice her blazing diamond rings when she pulled off her gloves, her beautiful new watch, which she consulted nervously from time to time, her plain but expensive dress, with all its appointments so very complete, even to the colour of the border of her handkerchief, and her neat silk stockings. Ah! she could see that—although she tried not to show it—Mrs. Glyn was changed, her mind was poisoned by riches; and he, poor young man, would never be able to keep her contented, now she had known what it was to be a great lady. Mrs. Holt shook her head doubtfully.

Madeline carried the baby down to the gate and looked out for Hugh, but no Hugh came, and baby was extremely heavy; then she went round the garden. She made her way into their sitting-room, with its old mahogany glass book-case, rush-bottomed chairs, brass-faced clock, samplers hanging on the wall, and plain red tiles under foot, and with a lovely summer breeze playing with the little white curtains through the open lattice, and the great high hollyhocks and sunflowers rearing up their tall heads as if trying to peep in from the garden. There was Hugh's writing just as he had left it; there was a well-known pipe; there in a corner stood the very stick that had betrayed him! On the spur of the moment she called in Mrs. Holt, and made over the baby to her motherly arms, and instantly sat down to write Hugh a letter—a letter with his own pen, indited at his own table.

"DEAR HUGH (she said),—

"I came down to see you, and am very sorry you are out, for I cannot wait, and I had so much to talk over. I am so glad to find baby looking well, and to hear such accounts of you. I believe you were at Belgrave-square yesterday. Hugh, what a rash visit it was; but fortunately no one suspects you or has the least idea that you are anything to Miss Grant. I feel quite another person now I am down here in the country, looking out of this window in front of me, in this dear

old garden, and the far-away peaceful wooded hills.

"I feel as if money was not anything in comparison to youth and health and peace, and that I could be happy here always with you; but I know that once back in my own boudoir this very self-same evening I shall change my mind once more, and look upon a rustic life as intolerable, and living here as being buried alive; but I shall never change about you, Hugh—no fear of that. I got your last letter quite safely, and have carefully laid to heart all you say; but dear, dear Hugh must let me take my own time with papa. I will tell him, sooner or later. I am really the best judge of how, when, and where. Leave it all to me. He will come round yet, and we shall all, like the good people in the fairy tale, 'live happy ever after.'

"On Saturday night we all go to Scotland for two months. We go by the night mail from King's cross. Papa has taken a lodge and shooting in Perthshire, and we are to have a succession of visitors. I hope to do great things in these two months, and will write to you very often and report progress—Ever, dear Hugh, your loving wife, M. G."

His loving wife put this effusion into an envelope, and directed it, and left it on the mantelpiece, where it would be sure to "catch his eye," and then she felt considerably relieved in her mind and heart, and had tea in the kitchen with Mrs. Holt, turning the cakes and praising the butter, and softening Mrs. Holt's feelings more and more the longer she stayed in her company. Then she had a confidential chat about baby and his clothes, and placed twenty pounds in Mrs. Holt's hands for his wardrobe, in spite of that good woman's emphatic assurance "that it was four times too much." She also made the farmer's wife a substantial present in money, telling her very prettily, with tears in her eyes, that it was not in payment of her kindness, for no money could pay for that, but as a small mark of gratitude.

By various means she reinstated herself rapidly in Mrs. Holt's good grace; and having hugged and kissed the baby over and over again, and taken a hearty leave of the farmer's wife, she once more turned her back on the Holt Hill, and set out for her father's luxurious mansion in Belgrave-square. Luckily for herself, she was home long before him; was dressed, and sitting half-buried in a chair, and engrossed in a novel when he came home, in an unusually good humour. He had been winning and losing in the best of company, and was very full of a certain Roman prince, who had been uncommonly pleasant, and "said he would like to be presented to you, Madeline!" he exclaimed, exultantly. His little hard head was so full of this new acquaintance that he never had room for a thought about how or where his daughter had spent her day; indeed, from alleviance to the contrary, she might never have been out of the house.

Hugh found Madeline's letter staring at him from the mantelpiece when he came home. He snatched it eagerly, and devoured it then and there, and as he came to the last line his sensations were those of bitter disappointment. Yes, and something more. He was hurt. There was an under-current of jaunty indifference, he declared to himself bitterly, that cut him to the quick. And she was going away for two months. Well, any way, he would see her off—the station was a public place. She need not see him, but he would see her; and the next day he carried out his intention, travelling up to town early in the afternoon, visiting his chambers, dining with his friend Jessop, and being all the same a full half-hour too early at King's cross. He watched and waited, and saw many likely-looking parties approach, but yet they, his particular party, came not, till within five minutes of the train's starting.

And what a fuss they made!—more than all their predecessors put together. There

was one footman running for tickets, another being madly carried down the platform in tow of two huge setters. One retainer had the booking of the luggage, another was arranging the interior of their Pullman sleeping car, and then the party themselves came up to it, and Hugh beheld his father-in-law for the first time—a neat, trim, fussy little man, talking vociferously, and gesticulating about "Lord Robert's luggage."

There was a very well-dressed dark woman—not young, but juvenile enough in air and style—who laughed and talked to a big man in a tweed suit, and looked at Mr. Grant with a contemptuous grimace, and shrugged her shapely shoulders; there was a "lout" in checks, so he mentally ticketed Lord Levanter; there was a girl, not remarkable for anything but a very tight Newmarket; there were two ladies' maids; and there was Madeline, last, not least—Madeline, so changed that he would hardly believe his eyes.

Madeline was dressed in a long travelling mantle and hat to match, holding a fat pug by a chain, and giving languid directions to burrying footmen and maids, and dispensing smiling adieus among a group of young men who had come to see them off (meaning her off).

This was not surely his Madeline—the little school-girl he had married, the devoted, struggling, hard-working wife and mother of No. 2, Solferino-terrace?

He stood back for a moment in the shadow of a big bookstall, and realised for the first time the immense gulf that divided him from Mr. Grant's heiress, the great yawning chasm that lay between him and Madeline. What would fill it?—what? He could think of no bridge but money.

Very bitter were his thoughts as he stood thus—poor, aloof, and alone—whilst his radiant wife made her beaming farewells from the window of the Pullman car.

"She should say good-bye to him, too," he said to himself, with a sudden fierce resolve; and stepping forward he stood in the full light, a little apart from the gay young men, who were now removing their hats with a real or simulated air of regret as the train slowly began to move that was to carry the popular heiress northwards.

Madeline smiled and nodded, and waved her hand. But who was this also removing his hat, this young man standing a little apart, further down the platform? It was Hugh—Hugh that she had not beheld for more than ten weeks. It gave her quite a shock to see him, but a pleasant shock, that sent her blood tingling through all her veins.

How well he looked, and how well he contrasted with those young members of the oratch-and-toothpick school whom she had just (she hoped) seen the last of! She would have blown him a kiss had she dared; but her father's little beady eyes were on her, and she could only sit and look. She might not even bow.

Then with a sudden compunction, and justly alarmed by the expression of his face, she looked quickly out of the window and waved her hand, and smiled.

The others promptly accepted this signal with demonstrations of rapture. Little did they guess that it was not for them, but for that quiet gentlemanly-looking fellow a few yards to their left. If they did not know this he did.

"Who is that man on the platform?" said Lady Rachel, "that looks as if he was seeing us off, for there is no one else in this car but ourselves," in a tone of complacent amusement.

"Oh! I don't know, I'm sure," responded Mr. Grant. "There are a heap of people further up, all going north. He belongs to them. I daresay he belongs to the Ravenswood party; Lord Ravenswood is in this train. It would not surprise me if he was his nephew, Lord Arthur Dacre. Distinguished-looking sort of chap; and took a good long

look at you, oh! Maddie?" facetiously. "Will know you again next time he sees you, eh? Highly delighted at his conceit. I suppose you have no idea who he is, eh?"

Madeline had an excellent idea of who he was, but this was no time to confide her secret to her parent, better to save this social bomb for a more discreet opportunity.

Madeline had a very shrewd idea that the mysterious gentleman, who had taken a good long look at her—the presumable Lord Arthur Dacre—was her own husband!

(To be continued.)

HAPPINESS.

"That happiness does still the longest thrive
Where joys and grief have turns alternative."

The quaint, old-time poet, whose name will remain an undying one while daffodils shall bloom, has regarded this vision of our ever-constant pursuit in its truest light—for surely the companionship of our best-beloved is the highest happiness, yet, like all earthly things, subject to time and change, and ever hovering on the borderland of sorrow.

Says Young:

"True wisdom is the fullest happiness."

It is sometimes pleasant to play the critic, and controvert these great authorities, despite their tomes of book-lore; but how sad 'twould be if none but the wise were happy! and what a darkened life would be that of the far greater number—the simple!

Somerville is more diffuse when saying:

"True happiness, if understood,
Consists alone in doing good."

Yet his definition appears another fallacy; for how many are there who lack both the power and the means to bestow this guerdon on their fellow-creatures?

"Then," says some philanthropist, "behold the happiness of others, and therein find the truest bliss!"

A beautiful theory; and though the angels may look down and witness it with joy ineffable, for poor, earth-bound mortality 'tis too unreal!

This thought of Byron contains a flash of human sympathy, which denotes that he was not always the misanthrope for which he has been condemned:

"They, who happiness would win, must share it!"

But how many and how varied are the sources from whence springs this glad visitant, numberless and diversified as its recipients! Induced by the temperament, the surroundings, or the early training of each human flower, alas, too often suffered to degenerate into a weed!

Perhaps the most abiding felicity is gained by the study of contentment—oft times a cold, hard lesson!

We may not look too high, nor wide, nor yet afar; neither waste the years allotted to us in futile strivings.

In such spirit has "Ouida" aptly and tersely written:

"Some are always looking for a four-leaved shamrock. In that sort of search life slips away unperceived: one is very soon left alone with one's dead leaves."

Let us turn from this moralizing to Sheridan Knowles's youthful heroine, and recall the depth of bliss that must have filled her heart when pouring forth her sweet, wild impulses, thus restrainedly:

"When I
Am happy, I'd have all things like me—not
That live and move, alone; but even such
As lack our faculties. Then could I weep,
That flowers should smile without perception
Of the sweetness they discourse. Yea, into rocks
Would I infuse soft sense to fill them with
The spirit of sweet joy, that everything
Should thrill as I do."

E.

HEAVEN AND EARTH.

How bright our days of life would seem,
If clouds of gloom and sadness
Would pass from sight, and leave no pain
To mar the heart in gladness;
How happy we could be, if all
Life's charms to us were given;
And what pure joy we all might know
If earth was more like heaven.

When there is not one ray of light
In the blue sky above us,
And round us falls the gloom of night,
With no friend near to love us,
Our life may be serene and blest—
From which all care is riven—
If we but walk in virtue's ways,
And make earth more like heaven.

If there was more of kindness shown,
And love to one another;
If we would soothe the heart in grief,
And help each lonely brother;
This life would be a better life,
And pain and care be driven
From our blest fold of happiness;
While earth would seem like heaven.

We all should bear each other's cares,
When gloom of life has bound us,
And not one star of hope we see,
With dark-clouds all around us;
For bliss will come to those who dwell
Where joys of life are given,
And who will bear their cross in love,
Till earth seems more like heaven.

THE FAIR ELAINE.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A "LADY BORN."

"Have you no relatives anywhere?" Philip asked, when his little charge had grown more calm.

"No, sir," he answered, "I do not know of anybody in the world who belongs to either father or mother who would care anything for me."

Philip's face lighted; if he took the boy to rear and educate he would prefer not to be hampered by relatives—it would be much better and pleasanter for both of them to have no one to interfere with their plans or to criticise their movements.

"I am sure, sir, I don't know what I am going to do," pursued the boy, plaintively: "I suppose I could work when I get well, if I only knew what to do; but it will be rather hard to get round with only one foot; and—it will take me a long time to pay up all I shall owe for the doctor, and the nurse, and—"

"Eddie," Philip interrupted, moved almost to tears by this evidence of his instinctive honour, "how would you like to give yourself to me, and be my boy? I, too," he added, with a keen pain at his heart, "have no one in the world who cares anything for me. I, too, am all alone. Would you be willing to let me adopt you?"

"What sir; would you be willing to take a boy like me? Why, I shall be nothing but a cripple all my life, and not good for very much!" the boy exclaimed, raising himself on his elbow, and staring in amazement at his companion, while his pale face flushed crimson, and he was actually panting with excitement.

"Yes, I should not only be 'willing,' but very glad if you would consent to such an arrangement; and don't be too sure about not being 'good-for-much,'" Philip returned, with a smile.

"But, sir, I—I'm afraid that you pity me now, and you might be sorry by-and-by," Eddie returned, the flush still on his face, and his eyes bright with gathering tears.

Philip reached out, and took the thin, trembling hand that lay near him.

"Will you be my boy until you see that I am beginning to be 'sorry'?" he asked, smiling still. "I will leave you perfectly free to go away and leave me then if you choose. I do pity you, of course," he added, "for it is a very hard thing to lose a foot, or any member of the body; but that is not so hard as to be obliged to live without any one to love you, and I have no one; I am a very lonely man, Eddie."

Eddie fell back upon his pillow and covered his face with his hands, a bitter sob rising to his lips, for Philip's reference to his lonely state had recalled his own desolate condition very forcibly.

He had loved his parents very devotedly, and those few words had made him realize, more than ever before, how much he should miss their love and care.

"I did not mean to remind you of your sorrow like this," Philip said, regretfully, "I know, of course, that I could never fill a father's place to you, but I would do what I could towards it. I believe you could brighten my solitary life, and thus we should help each other."

"You are very good, sir," Eddie replied, looking up again, and trying to speak steadily, "I think I should like to stay with you very much; but—"

"But what?" Philip asked, encouragingly.

"You said that you wanted to 'adopt' me—that means to make me the same as your own child, doesn't it?"

"Yes."

"I know that is very kind," he pursued, with evident embarrassment, "but—I don't think I could quite make up my mind to—call you 'father,' at least not just yet," and his lips trembled painfully.

"I could not ask you to do that," Philip returned, gently. "You may call me 'Uncle Philip' if you like; that will suit me better than any other name, and I will try to make you forget as soon as possible that I am not really and truly your uncle. Will this arrangement please you?"

"Yes, indeed, sir, I never expected to feel so happy again over anything," the child answered, with a very earnest little face, though his lips trembled. "It seems strange, though, that anybody should be so good to me just when I need it the most; but I will try to be a good boy and do just as you want me to."

"That is a good beginning, I am sure," Philip returned, looking much pleased; "and the first thing I want you to do is to get well as soon as possible, and then we will see what is before us in the new life."

"But I shall never be like other boys," Eddie said, sadly, "I must always be lame and go upon a crutch—"

"Don't dishearten yourself at the outset," Philip interrupted, "there is no sense in making yourself unnecessarily miserable. If your leg heals nicely we can have a shapely little French foot fitted to you, and after you get used to it, with a nice pair of boots on, no one would know but what you have two feet the same as anybody else."

"Oh! can that be done?" cried Eddie, with excited eagerness.

"Yes; it has been done a great many times—some people have lost almost the whole of a leg or arm, and art has supplied the deficiency so as to make it almost unnoticeable."

"And will I be able to walk like other people?"

"Of course you will; you may be a trifle lame at first, but it will be so slight that one would scarcely mind it."

"Oh!" with a sigh of content, "I am no glad—I have been so wretched and ill for nothing. I want to get right up and shout hooray! but," checking himself suddenly, "won't it cost a heap?"

Philip laughed at his eager inquisitiveness; he had not seen him appear so much like a genuine boy before. Hope was putting new life into him.

"You are not to trouble yourself about the cost," he returned; "get well and ready for your new foot, and you shall have it. Now are you to be my boy from this time?" and he held out his hand as he spoke.

The thin white hand upon the coverlid was lifted and laid into it unhesitatingly, and with a very earnest look in his fine eyes Eddie responded:

"Yes, indeed; and thank you very much—Uncle Philip."

Thus was sealed the compact which gave to Philip Paxton a new interest in life.

He was troubled with many misgivings regarding his ability to rear his protege; he realized his own weakness so fully that he feared their influence upon Eddie; but he resolved to do the best that he could for him, and believed that he would himself be a better man for the companionship of this noble-minded, intelligent boy.

And so the weeks lapsed into months; Eddie Winthrop growing better all the while under kind and judicious treatment. His pale cheeks filled out round and full, and grew rosy with health; his injured limb healed, and he was not long in learning how to help himself, and make his well foot do the work of two, for the other was still very sensitive, and it would be a long time yet before he could bear to have a false one attached.

Philip had bought him a strong, but light crutch, and he soon grew very expert with it, being able to walk as fast as even Philip himself cared to go.

And the man was changed, also, in many respects; his nature seemed to expand, his sympathies were enlarged, his affection broadened and deepened with the thought and care which he was obliged to exercise over his young charge; while Eddie, thinking that no one was ever so grand and noble as "Uncle Philip," grew to admire and love him more and more every day.

As soon as he was able, Philip thought it best for him to resume his lessons which had been so cruelly interrupted; but until he was thoroughly strong and well he was unwilling to have him attend at any regular school, and so a competent teacher was secured to come to him for a few hours each day.

The boy displayed quite a talent for drawing, and begged that he might receive instruction in that also.

"You told me to ask for what I would like, Uncle Philip," he said, somewhat timidly, when he preferred this his first request of any moment.

"You shall learn to draw to your heart's content," was the ready response; "have you ever made any pictures?"

"No, not pictures really, but figures; we were taught to do that in school. See! I will make that vase for you," said the embryo artist, pointing to one that stood upon the table.

He was very still for a little while, and then pushed a paper across to Philip, who sat opposite him.

He was surprised to see a very correct and well-executed copy of the vase, and resolved to let him cultivate his talent if he wished.

"That is very well done," he said, "and you shall take lessons if you desire; do you like to do it?"

"Oh, yes, sir, I would like to be an artist," Eddie replied, flushing with enthusiasm.

"Well, an artist you shall be then, if that is your bent," Philip said within himself, and a drawing-master was forthwith engaged to give him lessons.

About this time Arley returned. She had travelled eight months with Lady Herbert, and her son instead of four or five, as they had originally intended.

Nominally, she was the companion of Lady Herbert, but she was really regarded more as a friend and equal by them both, while every day of her stay with them seemed to

strengthen their friendship and admiration for her.

As soon as they discovered how deftly she handled pencil and brush both mother and son advised her to put herself under first-class instruction.

It was what she had longed to do ever since she became conscious of the genius burning within her; but she had lacked the means, besides not feeling quite sure that her talent was of an order high enough to make the expenditure advisable; she was unwilling to make art a profession and give her name to the public unless she could excel and her standard was high.

But Lady Herbert said so much, and Sir Charles, in his quiet but conclusive way, having remarked that it would not be right for her to slight her gift, she yielded, and during the two months of their stay in Florence, and the three that they were in Rome, she went every day to paint under the teaching of the best masters that could be found.

She did not know that these opportunities were made purposely for her, or that Sir Charles, in arranging with the artists with whom she was to study, gave them to understand that their terms must be very reasonable to the young lady, while he would make up the deficiency in price, if there should be any.

This was, Lady Herbert's idea, for she was greatly interested in her charming protégée; but had Arley suspected it, nothing would have induced her to accept such costly favours.

But everything was done with so much delicacy, and in such a matter-of-fact way, that she did not mistrust.

Lady Herbert pretended that it would take her a long time to do justice to those two cities so full of art.

"I am an old woman," she said one day, "and I shall probably never see either Rome or Florence again, so I am going to take plenty of time and pack my memory full of their treasures to carry home for future enjoyment."

But the "plenty of time" was more on Arley's account than on her own, for twice before she had traversed Italy from end to end.

So our young artist gave herself enthusiastically to her work, making such rapid progress that her teachers promised her that some day she would do something famous; but she did not feel quite easy in her mind, and often cut her days short to devote herself to Lady Herbert.

"You must not do so, dear," she said, chidingly to her, when one afternoon she left her work and came to her earlier than usual; "you must put all the knowledge possible into this pretty head; and all the skill and cunning you can into these fingers while we are here; it would be a pity not to make the most of these opportunities, when your efforts promise so much, too."

"But I shall not fulfil my obligations to you if I spend so many hours every day over my painting," Arley replied, with a troubled countenance.

"Do not speak of obligations," Lady Herbert answered, with her sunny smile, "when it is such a pleasure to me to have you with me; besides, I am as much interested to have your pictures finished before we leave as you can possibly be. However," she added, with a merry twinkle in her eyes, "if you feel very much oppressed you shall paint me a charming a picture as you choose when we return; and it shall have the best light in my drawing-room."

"How kind you are to me," Arley said, gratefully, and there were tears in her eyes as she lifted them to her friend; but she could not refuse her kindness without appearing to underestimate it, and went back to her painting with renewed energy.

She had told Lady Herbert all her sad story, and found in her a true sympathizer and counsellor; but after it was once related she strove to hide all her unhappiness within her

own heart, and to be always calm, and even cheerful, when in the presence of her friends.

They admired her still more for this, and often regarded her invariable good nature as a mark of heroism, for they knew well enough that she must have many sad and wretched hours.

There were indeed times when she felt as if she could not bear her hard lot—when her nights would be spent in weeping and almost rebellious grief.

But her smarting eyes and heavy head always warned her the next day that such indulgence would not do—that she would soon be prostrated and unfit for work if she allowed her sorrow to rule her thus; so she strove to court forgetfulness by every possible device.

She was, however, developing into a magnificent woman.

A mantle of dignity that was entirely new to her seemed to settle upon her, but it was very becoming to her, giving her an air of elegance and a repose of manner which gay, impulsive Arley Wentworth had never possessed.

Wherever the party went she was much admired, and might have made herself the centre of the choicest society; but she persistently refused all introductions—except, perhaps, when Sir Charles or his mother chanced to meet some particular friends—and conducted herself with so much reserve that it was impossible for any one to pay her marked attention.

She had no idea where Philip might be; she had thought that he would return to England, but no mention was made of him in any of the letters which she received, and this led her to think he could not be in London, and that nothing was as yet known of their separation.

Consequently she governed herself accordingly, never saying anything when she wrote which would lead to a suspicion of the truth. It would be hard enough to have it known when she returned, she thought; and it would be so much easier to tell it than to write it.

She did not write oftener than she felt actually obliged to, in order to keep Miss McAllister, from being anxious about her; it was such a task, and was always accompanied by such bitterness and so many sad remembrances—while, too, she felt guilty in practising the least deception regarding her true condition—that her strength always gave out before her letter was done.

And so the months rolled by.

After leaving Rome, where Arley completed her last picture—and "a great success for so young an artist," her master told her—they roamed from place to place, stopping a few days here and a few there—never more than a week anywhere, for Lady Herbert thought her charge looked thin and not quite as well as she might, and needed change of scene—and thus Arley missed Elaine's important communications.

It was not until they got back to Paris (where Sir Charles had of late ordered all mail matter to be forwarded) that she received her first letter relating to her discoveries. The others she never received.

Sir Charles handed it to her the morning after their arrival, while they were sitting over their quiet breakfast in Lady Herbert's parlour.

She recognized the writing on the envelope at once, and taking a little penknife from her pocket, she cut it across the end with an eager face, but little dreaming how important its contents were.

But she had not read more than a page or two before the sheets dropped from her nerveless fingers, and she turned a pale, startled face upon Lady Herbert.

"I must go home immediately," she said, in tremulous tones.

They had intended remaining a couple of weeks longer in Paris, so that Arley might have an opportunity to study some paintings in the Louvre, which her master in Rome had recommended.

"Dear child, have you bad news in your letter?" Lady Herbert asked, anxiously, while

Sir Charles looked the concern he felt as he observed her emotion.

"No good news," Arley replied, more steadily; "but it has taken me so by surprise that I am wholly unprepared for it. You have heard me speak of my friend, Lady Elaine Warburton; she writes me that she has had quite an adventure, meeting that woman—Jane Collins, of whom I have also told you—and through her she has gained the same clue to my parentage which I learned when I met her in Madrid. It excited a suspicion in her mind, and she resolved to take the tangled thread in hand and unravel it, if it was a possible thing. She has succeeded—at least she has discovered who I am," and Arley's cheeks were a flaming scarlet as she made the announcement.

"That is as far as I was able to get in my letter," she resumed, "I was so startled that I could not go on; but if you will excuse me I will go away and finish it, and then come and tell you the result."

Lady Herbert gave the desired permission, and Arley left the room.

But when she reached her own chamber she could not resume her letter at once; she could only hug it to her throbbing heart, and weep tears of joy that at last she would know her own place in the world.

She knew that it would be an honourable place too, for in one eager, joyful sentence, Lady Elaine had written:

"Arley, my darling, rejoice! rejoice! for you are a 'lady born.' But come home quickly, for I must guard this grand secret until I can whisper it directly into your own ear."

We already know that the letter revealed nothing save that the puzzle was solved, and Arley was quite disappointed after reading it through twice to learn nothing definite beyond that.

But for all that, it was with a very happy face that she carried it to Lady Herbert, who, after listening attentively while she read it, rejoiced most heartily with her.

CHAPTER XL.

THE BITTER QUESTION.

"When would you like to go home?" Lady Herbert asked, after Lady Elaine's letter had been discussed upon all its points, and seeing that Arley appeared restless and eager.

"At once—to-morrow; for seal!" pointing to the date, "this letter has been more than three months coming to me."

"True; I am very sorry it should have been so delayed; but we will make all possible haste now," Lady Herbert returned, with the utmost kindness.

"Oh, do not let me disarrange your plans!" Arley exclaimed, quickly. "I can go alone—the journey from Paris to Calais is so direct; while it will not be very much to cross the channel to Dover, and then go up to London. You have been so kind and have done so much for me that I do not feel right to trespass upon you any more."

"Hush, dear," said her companion, reprovably, "do not ever use that word to me again; you have never 'trespassed'; but I, too, am ready to go home—I am weary of roving; besides," she added, with a playful smile, "my curiosity is on the qui vive—I want to learn this precious secret too, so that I may rejoice with you. Those words 'lady born,' look very nice on paper, and I am so glad that you have that assurance, although I have been confident of it from the hour that I first saw you, and you have proved yourself a lady, in every sense of the word, during all the time that you have been with me, and I have grown to love you very dearly."

Lady Herbert bent forward as she concluded, and kissed Arley tenderly upon her lips; while she, with something of her old impulsive nature, threw her arms around her neck and heartily returned the caress.

Sir Charles appeared as delighted with the

news as his mother had been, and eagerly seconded her proposal to return immediately to England; and it was therefore arranged that they should leave Paris the next morning.

I doubt if such sweet hypocrisy was ever practised upon any one before; but Arley never once mistrusted that these new friends of hers had done a great deal more of travelling, and remained much longer abroad, than they had originally intended, solely on her account.

They realized what a trial it would be to her to go back to London, where all her troubles would at once become known and gossiped about; for she had told them that she was keeping them from her friends until she could go back to them and tell them herself.

They were satisfied, too, that she possessed superior talent, and would yet make her mark in the world if she could have proper advantages; and since she had told them that she intended to make art her profession and a means of support, they had secretly contrived to make the way to this end as easy as possible for her.

"You see I have my own living to earn," Arley had once said to Lady Herbert when they had been saying something about her future; "and if I really have a talent for painting, I think it will be much more profitable than teaching, or almost anything else, and certainly much more to my taste. I never should have thought of it if I had not been so successful with my pencil in Madrid—that led me to hope a great deal for the future; but if I ever do accomplish anything worthy of note, it will be because you have done so much to help me, dear Lady Herbert."

"It will be because of your energy, industry, and resolution, my dear," Lady Herbert had replied, but thinking her very lovely in her gratitude, "and I believe you will succeed even beyond your expectations."

Sir Charles had been enthusiastic over her paintings from the first; "there was such delicacy of touch about them, such fineness of execution and tasteful colouring," he said, and he promised to secure a place for them in the art exhibition the first season after their return.

He had been such a kind, such a reasonable, practical friend to her from the first, that she had come to regard him as a man whose equal it would be difficult to find among a thousand.

He had always been attentive to every wish and need, but never obtrusively so, and it was in such an easy, matter-of-fact way that it appeared to be no effort on his part; while he admired Arley exceedingly, thinking her one of the most charming women, both physically and mentally, whom he had ever met, and yet he had never once thought of falling in love with her, as an ordinary man would have done; he entertained for her a friendship as true and pure as it was rare, and which was destined to grow and thrive as long as they both lived.

"There never was a more devoted son nor a kinder friend," Arley was wont to think. "He is noble to his heart's core, and he could no more commit a mean action than light could become darkness. Oh, that there were more like him in the world!"

Then there would arise the bitter question: "Why could not Phillip have been such a man? He seemed like it when she first knew him; and how supremely blessed she would have been in the love of such an one!"

How often, when preparing for her marriage, she had pictured to herself her future home, which she meant to make so attractive by a thousand womanly devices—to beautify and adorn it until it should become the "dearest spot on earth" to both Phillip and herself.

How she had imagined that she should watch for her husband's coming and speed his going day by day, and learn to love and honour him more and more as the years went by, each one bringing to them greater content and more fulness of joy.

But this vision had vanished like mist before the scorching summer's sun; it had been only a treacherous "will-o'-the-wisp" luring her forward to destruction, and into a slough from which there seemed no escape.

She had of late been able to look more calmly upon her future; she had become so interested in her work, so thoroughly imbued with an artistic enthusiasm, that she believed it would, to a great extent, fill the terrible void which had come into her life. She believed that, henceforth, she should be "wedded to her profession," that it would so engross her thoughts and occupy her time that the bitterness of the past would gradually soften and wear away.

But now, as she was about to return to her old home, she was thrown into a perfect tumult of contending emotions. Much as she longed to see Miss McAllister—to feel her loving arms about her, and hear the fond words of welcome which she knew she would breathe in her ear; great as was her impatience to learn Lady Elaine's precious secret, and to be able to occupy her proper position in the world, yet she shrank painfully from London, with all its former associations, and the large circle of friends who would rise up to greet her on every hand.

It was almost two years since she went away, since she bade her dear aunt farewell, and went out from her old home a bride; but, oh, such a wretched bride! and how miserable the intervening months had been! Her heart was filled with pain as she recalled them.

But her greatest trial was yet to come, and every hour only increased her dread of the moment when she would be obliged to reveal all her trouble and disgrace, for she felt that it was a disgrace to be returning thus alone.

What would Lady Elaine say to it all? How would happy, conscientious Annie Vane regard this separation from her husband, whom she had so solemnly promised to love and honour until death should part them? How would Sir Anthony and Lady Hamilton regard her act?

Her heart sank lower and lower as they drew near old England's shores, until it seemed as if all strength was forsaking her, and all courage, also, to meet the rapidly-approaching ordeal.

A great weight seemed to oppress her—her eyes grew heavy, and purple circles settled beneath them; her cheeks lost their bright colour, and a nervous trembling seized her. She looked more like someone about to be banished into exile than like a wanderer returning to her native land.

"Courage, dear," Lady Herbert whispered, as the swiftly moving train drew near London, and she saw how the poor child was overcome; "think of the good in store for you, and forget, as far as may be, the evil of the past."

"Ah! dear Lady Herbert," Arley said, clinging to her kind friend; "I cannot forget how my whole life has been blighted since I last saw my home—it all comes back to me, with such fearful freshness, the nearer we come to our journey's end."

"Just think," she added, with vehement bitterness; "what a mark—what a target I shall be during all the years to come; how I shall be pointed out and introduced as 'Mrs. Paxton, Philip Paxton's wife, you know, though they do not live together.' Then will follow a suggestive shrug of the shoulder, with a pitying look from some, perhaps, and a contemptuous glance from others. I do not feel as if I could bear it."

"Arley, my dear," Lady Herbert returned, gravely; "you are over-sensitive about all this. No one could possibly be so unreasonable as to regard you with contempt after once learning the truth."

"No one shall ever know it," Arley interrupted, passionately, while a bitter sob burst from her lips. "I shall never tell it—except to the few who *must* know. I shall hide myself as far as possible from everybody—avoid all society, and give myself up wholly to my work. If Phillip has not returned to England, and our situation is still unknown, I shall never open

my lips to make it public—the world may think what it will."

"You forget, dear child, what you are returning for," Lady Herbert answered, soothingly; "you forget that you may have a home and friends awaiting you; that you are a 'lady born,' and that duties—of which you are entirely ignorant, and which may interfere with the 'work' you are planning to do, as well as the seclusion you are coveting—may require your time and attention. We must remember that we are not our own, but that our lives belong to Him who gave them, and we must take up every duty which He places before us."

Arley looked up humbled.

"I know," she said, sadly; "but the way seems hard and the path beset with thorns; and yet," she added, her face lighting a trifle; "If I thought that a home and friends were awaiting me—if I could believe that there would be father or mother, brother or sister, or anyone who would love me, I think I should not be quite so miserable. Oh, Lady Herbert, do you believe that I shall find someone who really belongs to me? Elaine wrote of my recovered name and position, but there was not a word regarding kith or kin."

Lady Herbert bent down and kissed the face raised to hers (they were alone, Sir Charles having gone into a smoking-carriage at the last station); it was flushed, and eager, and tremulous now with the dawn of a new hope upon it.

"My dear," she said, tenderly; "I think it would be very strange if there was not some one waiting to claim you."

"Oh, what a comforter you are!" Arley murmured; and, bowing her head upon her companion's shoulder, she wept away the pain and bitterness which had so oppressed her heart, and then grew calm and almost cheerful once more.

And thus she came back to England.

(To be continued.)

PAPER.—Wonderful things are now made from properly prepared paper. Among other things recently exhibited were paper buckets, "bronzes," urns, asphalt roofing, water-cans, carpets, shirts, whole suits of clothes, jewellery, materials for garden walks, window-curtains, lanterns, and pocket-handkerchiefs. The most striking of the many objects exhibited in this material was, perhaps, a fire-stove with a cheerful fire burning in it. We have from time to time noted the announcements of newly-invented railway carriages and carriage-wheels, chimney-pots, flour-barrels, cottage walls, roofing tiles and bricks, and dies for stamping, all made of paper. A material capable of so many uses, so very diversified in character, is obviously destined to play a very important part in our manufacturing future. Among the latest novelties of this kind are paper "blankets." Attention has frequently been called to the value of ordinary sheets of paper as a substitute for bed-clothes, or, at least, as an addition to bed-clothes. The idea seems to have suggested the fabrication of "blankets" from this cheap material, and if all that is said of them is true, they ought to be extensively used. For the extremely indigent they should be great boon, and it is in their favour, perhaps, that they cannot, of course, be so durable as ordinary woollen or cotton goods. The bedding of many of the poor cannot but be productive of much sickness and disease, and a very cheap material, that will last only a comparatively short time, must be better than durable articles that are rarely or never washed. The value of an introduction of this kind for charitable purposes, just at the commencement of a cold season, may be considered to take these new blankets rather out of the ordinary list of goods on the market, and to justify a special reference to them.

CLIFFE COURT.

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CHAPTER XII.

SEPTEMBER came in with soft breezes, mellow air, and sunshine to bring out the gorgeous autumnal tints on the leaves, but evidently it had no intention of continuing such mildness, for before long a complete change took place in the weather, and for dullness and dampness it might have rivalled November itself.

The skies were one uniform expanse of slate-coloured clouds, hanging low over the sodden earth; rain fell in a continuous downpour that wetted you to the skin before you had been out a quarter of an hour; and the leaves, fluttering slowly to the ground, lay in little melancholy heaps, sadly suggestive of the coming winter.

The Chase looked dreary enough outside, and was very little better in; for the large, square rooms, with the old-fashioned furniture and fireless grates, gave one an eerie sense of desolation, and Sir Ascot was not wrong when he said his wife's boudoir was the most cheerful place in the house, and it therefore behaved her to keep to it.

Alicia had no desire to do otherwise, for a terrible lassitude had fallen upon her, making even the exertion of going out-of-doors too much for her.

Dr. West came every day, and, in spite of her remonstrances, insisted on prescribing and sending constant supplies of medicine; and this, coupled with the fact of her rarely leaving her apartments, and never seeing visitors (for the Baronet had given stringent orders against their being admitted) soon induced the belief in the household that there must be something serious the matter with her.

It happened that just before Douglas was sent away her maid had left, and Sir Ascot, somewhat against her will, undertook to find her another; however, she did not trouble herself much about the matter, and in due time the new servant arrived—a middle aged woman, with a dark, inscrutable face, and cold grey eyes—a woman with a history, but whose features were a mask that effectually concealed it, as well as her present thoughts and feelings.

Her name was Robson, and she speedily proved herself thoroughly conversant with the duties of a lady's maid, leaving her mistress nothing to complain of; but for all that, Alicia was conscious of a feeling that almost amounted to dislike towards her. She tried hard to master it, telling herself it was an unworthy prejudice, but there are certain instincts that defy reason, and this was one.

Two memories constantly haunted her—her child and Colonel Stuart, and there were times when she absolutely longed to know where the soldier was, whether—as was most probable—he had gone back to India, or if he was still in England.

That she had no right to think of him—that between them was a great gulf, which nothing but death could bridge across—she had told herself over and over again, as she strove with all her strength to crush the love that the sight of him had fanned into a flame of its original brightness.

As well might she have striven to stem with her foot the torrent of some mountain stream!

The love was a part of herself, and to uproot it would be to tear out her own heart.

Sometimes, bereft of her child, existence seemed too hard to be borne. He had been the one link that held her, the one interest that bound her to life; and now the future stretched before her in a dim vista of years so hopeless that she drew back, shudderingly, from the prospect.

"Three score years and ten people sometimes achieve, and I am only twenty-three," she said to herself one afternoon, as she stood at the window, gazing out on the low skies, and listening to the dismal dripping of the rain

on the stones below. "I have, perhaps, forty-seven more years to linger through. And yet there are some who cling to life as a goodly thing, from which they are loth to part. Oh, Heaven! how willingly would I lay it down if it were not for little Douglas!"

She walked the length of the room, then came back to the window again. The wind was moaning through the branches and round the house with a strange sobbing sound that resembled a cry of despair.

"It is like a soul in pain," she murmured, with a shudder. "I think I must be getting full of strange fancies. Such ideas never used to strike me."

A sudden resolution took possession of her. She would go out in the air, and see if it did her any good.

Hitherto the rain had been quite sufficient excuse for Sir Ascot's insisting on her keeping indoors, and she had not experienced the slightest desire for leaving the house; but now she felt an untold longing to get clear of the Chase and its influences, and ten minutes later she was outside, wrapped in an ulster, and with her umbrella up, hurrying along towards the high road.

She had no definite purpose in view: she only wanted to walk and get very tired, so that when she got home she might sleep. The nights had seemed so terribly long of late!

Before she had gone very far there came the odour of cigar-smoke close at hand, and she was conscious someone must be behind. A few seconds afterwards a voice, whose every inflection she knew, said,—

"Lady Carlyon, I am surprised to see you!"

It was Colonel Stuart, and she turned and gave him her hand, trembling too much to speak.

Ordinary greetings between these two seemed the veriest mockery, and they continued walking side by side for some distance in complete silence. At last the soldier said,—

"Last night I met your husband at the Molyneux, and he told me you were very unwell. His manner was so mysterious that it gave me the impression there must be something more than temporary indisposition the matter with you."

"I am not well," she answered; "but I don't know that I have any specific ailment."

He looked at her long and closely, noticing the shadowy hollows under the dark eyes, the pathetic quiver of the lips, and then turned away abruptly, checking the words that rose to his tongue.

He knew he must exercise a stern command over himself, but the sight of her wan face almost unmanned him.

It had come on to rain much faster now, a sudden storm that would probably not last long, but that was violent enough while it did last.

Colonel Stuart looked round to see if there was any shelter near, and caught sight of a shed just inside a field, the gate of which happened to be open.

"We had better go inside there for a few minutes until the shower is over," he said. "You will be wet through, and catch your death of cold if you stay out here much longer."

She obeyed the suggestion without remark, and he took from her her dripping umbrella, and closed it; then they both stood looking out on the dreary, tear-blotted landscape, shut in on all sides by a veil of mist.

"Do you remember the last time we were out for a walk together?" he asked, presently, in a tone that shook a little. "It was summer then, and the wild roses were in blossom. I picked you a spray, and you wore it in your dress, and as you put it in you told me how soon the flowers would fade—what a brief, bright life theirs was. Our happiness resembled it."

Alicia turned away her head to hide the

tears that had sprung into her eyes at the recollection.

"It is cruel of you to remind me of those days," she murmured, reproachfully.

"Is it?" he said, with a quick, impulsive sigh, then he turned suddenly, and caught her hands in his, his breath coming very fast. "Suppose they could return, Alicia—suppose fate threw us once more together, and those happy days came back, bright with the sunshine that once lighted them?"

"What do you mean?" she exclaimed, her eyes widening, while she strove, but vainly, to release her hands from his grasp.

"I will tell you. Heaven knows I never meant to say these words to you, but a power stronger than my resolution compels me! Alicia, it was treachery that separated us—treachery that gave you to Sir Ascot Carlyon—treachery that forced you to utter the vows that made you his wife! Do you think such vows are holy in the sight of Heaven?"

She could only look at him mutely, and, indeed, he gave her no time to speak, for he continued,—

"Marriage, when it is the union of two hearts, is a sacred thing, ordained of Heaven, but marriage where only hands are joined is simply an institution of society, in which there is nothing sacred, nothing holy—a thing that is amenable to human laws, and that the ruling of a judge in a Divorce Court can set aside! Of such a class is yours with Sir Ascot Carlyon. To whom, therefore, do you think you belong—the man whose lies deceived you, and who cares nothing about you, or the one who loves you with his whole heart and soul—who would willingly lay down his life to secure your welfare?"

He was terribly excited—his face had flushed, his lips trembled. She could feel the quick beating of his pulses as his hand pressed hers.

"I repeat, your husband does not care for you," he went on, presently; "last night he never left Lady De Roubaix's side, and made no efforts to disguise a devotion that was an insult to you. If I had found you happy, cared for, I would have gone away in silence—satisfied even, but it is not so. It does not require a lover's eye to see your misery, for you carry it written all too plainly on your features. Alicia! come to me—let me love and cherish and care for you—let me show you what a husband should be!"

His voice was full of passionate, urgent entreaty, his eyes, tender, pleading, gazed into hers, and held them by the spell of their lovelight. He drew her to him, and for one moment she was held close against his beating heart.

We read in newspapers of battles fought under the leadership of daring generals—of the mighty onset of contending legions, of the clash of steel and the rattle of bullets, of crushing defeat or splendid victory; but there is another sort of battle whose field is the human heart, and of it there is none to speak.

Yet, if we were gifted with omniscient power, if we could look into our fellow-creatures' souls, and penetrate their secrets, maybe we might witness a warfare fiercer than any of those that history has written—we might see the triumph of conquest achieved, the humiliation of defeat, where the passions lie dead, side by side with their beloved idols.

But of these we know nothing, for the heart keeps its own secrets.

Who shall say what conflict raged in Alicia Carlyon's breast during that one brief moment while she lay in Stuart's arms?

On the one side she was offered happiness and love, on the other lay wretchedness and duty.

The fight was a hard one, but her good angel conquered, and she was true to herself.

She wrenched herself from his clasp, and stood a few paces away, both hands pressed against her beating heart.

"And you, who pretend to love me, would drag me down to such a depth!"

"No, no; you mistake me!" he exclaimed, eagerly. "If you will only consent to come with me I will take you to my mother, and leave you there until your husband has obtained a divorce; then we can be married. Believe me, darling, the step would be justified in the sight of Heaven and man."

She shook her head, smiling sadly.

"Evil is never justified even that good may come. No, Basil, if I were to do as you say your love for me would not be what it is at the present moment. There is a consciousness of duty that outlives the passion of youth, and if I lost that I should be more miserable than I am now, for I still have my little child to think of and hope for. Do not say more to me!" she exclaimed, interrupting him, as he was about to speak, with a gesture of earnest entreaty, while her eyes grew wild. "Do not tempt me; you are stronger than I am, remember."

This piteous appeal to his manhood did more than anything else towards silencing him, and the words he was about uttering died on his lips.

"Very well," he said at last, his voice low and hoarse with pain, "I will obey you, and say good-bye!"

"Yes," she said, coming up to him, and putting her two slim white hands on his breast, while her eyes gazed up into his with all the pathos of an eternal farewell, "it will be good-bye for ever, for we must never see each other more. You will go back to India knowing that we shall not meet again on this side the grave; and I—well, I shall try and believe there is another life after this, where wrongs are righted, and it is possible to be happy."

"Give me one kiss then, Alicia; the last I shall ever have from you. It will be no wrong to your husband."

She obeyed, and for a moment their lips met; then he left her, and went out into the blinding rain, and on towards the valley where his home was, and where the mist was lying in heavy wreaths that shut out the distant prospect, as despair shut out all hope of happiness from his own life.

CHAPTER XIII.

THERE are some women whose presence in a sick chamber seems so perfectly natural that one never stays to question how they got there, or whether they know enough about nursing to render them of use. Such an one was Arline—flitting gently about the room, moving the pillows without disturbing the sleeper, putting things straight in a swift, noiseless way, her soft footfall waking no more echo than the folds of her woollen draperies.

Dr. Fletcher, who was rather particular with his patient, had not made the slightest objection to her sometimes taking the place of the professional nurse, and allowing the latter to have her much-needed rest; but Lady De Roubalix was quite a different kind of person, and the physician stared as if he could hardly believe his eyes, when, coming to pay a late afternoon visit, he found the Countess installed at the bedside—a singularly incongruous figure in that plain, though neatly-furnished apartment.

"You looked surprised, doctor," she said, with a gracious smile. "May I not attempt to make myself useful sometimes?"

"You may attempt it," replied the physician, with a dubious emphasis on the word that was hardly flattering.

"You are not afraid of your patient getting badly attended to, are you?"

He did not reply, but leaned over the sick woman, who was lying propped up by pillows, her eyes gazing vacantly out of the window, while the fingers of her left hand grasped tightly the little bag round her neck.

"What put it into your head to come here, if I may ask, Lady De Roubalix?" said the

doctor, turning to the Countess, who coloured a little, either at the question, or at the tone in which it was asked.

"I thought I might be of some use—one gets tired of doing nothing."

"Hum! It has taken you some time to find that out, has it not?" Dr. Fletcher's tongue was famed all over W—shire for its caustic severity, and Lady De Roubalix was not one of his favourites. However, it seemed to strike him that he had said a little too much; for he added quickly, "I beg your pardon, but, as a rule, ladies fight shy of sick rooms for fear of infection, or some rubbish of that sort. I am glad you prove yourself an exception."

"What do you think of Mrs. Grant to-day?"

"The same as I thought yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that. She is progressing rapidly, so far as health is concerned, and will very soon be well enough to be up and about, but I'm afraid her memory is entirely gone."

"Do you mean she will be an idiot?"

"Hardly that. She may understand what is going on about her, but—for some time at all events—her recollection of the past must be a blank. She may recover it eventually, but I fear it will be a very slow process."

Having said which he prepared to depart.

"Tell the nurse to keep on with the medicine at regular intervals, and see that nourishment is given pretty often," were his parting directions as he stood at the door.

"I will tell her, and—oh! Dr. Fletcher, I want you to send me a little laudanum sometime this evening. I have had neuralgia, and that is the only thing that eases it at all."

The doctor promised not to forget, and then went away, Clarice standing thoughtfully by the bedside, and watching the patient, who was smiling insanely at a fly that had settled on her right hand—her left never losing its hold of the little bag.

If the Countess had known what was going on downstairs she might possibly have been less calm, for a question that nearly concerned her was being discussed between Lord Cliffe and his nephew. The former had sought Hubert in his study, and found him, for a wonder, doing nothing.

"How is it you are not out?" he asked, taking a seat opposite.

"I don't know—wasn't in the humour for it, I suppose. At any rate, I didn't think I cared so much for potting birds this morning as for staying at home."

"Bad sign, Hubert," observed Lord Cliffe, smiling; "looks as if you were in love."

The young man coloured violently, and avoided meeting the Viscount's eyes.

"Do you remember our conversation the day Clarice came?" went on Lord Cliffe, after a moment's pause.

"Perfectly," was the low-voiced rejoinder.

"I suppose you have not yet said anything to your cousin?"

"Do you mean proposed to her?"

"Well, no, hardly that. You might have given her reason to suppose you cared for her without going quite so far."

"I have not done so—I have not said a word to her that could possibly be construed into a declaration of love."

"Then," said Lord Cliffe, deliberately, "I think it is about time you had."

Hubert did not reply. He had taken up an ivory paper-knife, and was balancing it with the utmost nicely on his finger.

"She has been here some time now," continued his uncle; "and so far as I can judge, you have not the smallest reason to fear a refusal, for Clarice has evinced a most decided preference for you."

"No more for me than for any other man who pays her compliments and attention," declared Hubert. "She is certainly insatiate in her demands on both."

Lord Cliffe looked slightly embarrassed.

"Of course she is a coquette—all women are, more or less, certainly all pretty ones."

Hubert thought of one who was not, but he refrained from saying anything.

"It is true that all the country looks upon you as virtually engaged to her, but it will be better to come to a full understanding at once, and then your marriage need not be long delayed."

"Uncle!" exclaimed Hubert, impulsively, "I wish you would not press me so much on this matter. The fact is, I am not in love with Clarice."

"Then you ought to be! She is young and beautiful. What more, in Heaven's name, do you want?"

"One doesn't give affection in return for a certain amount of youth or good looks. Love is not a marketable commodity, to be bought and sold."

"Love is a delusion of the senses—a silly infatuation—a theme for foolish poets to drivel about!" Lord Cliffe exclaimed, angrily. "The practical part of society can do well enough without it, and why you should think fit to make so much fuss over such stuff and nonsense totally passes my comprehension. However, I won't argue the point with you; it simply resolves itself into this. I have made up my mind that you shall marry Clarice, and I wish you to lose no time in proposing to her."

He got up, and walked excitedly to the window, Hubert meanwhile keeping his eyes fixed on the ground, and saying nothing.

After a few minutes' silence he proceeded,—

"Ask her to-day to marry you. Daintree, my lawyer, is coming over to-morrow night, and then we can give him instructions regarding the preparation of the settlements, and there will be no unnecessary delay."

"No!" said Hubert, letting the paper-knife fall heavily to the ground. "I won't propose to her to-day; it's Friday, and therefore unlucky," he added, with a forced laugh. "I'll give myself twenty-four more hours' liberty, and then—"

"Then you will ask her? Very well, a day more or less does not make much difference, and I am quite content so that I know you will eventually marry her."

The Viscount went out, breathing an involuntary sigh of relief, for he felt that his object was virtually accomplished.

"It will set everything straight," he muttered to himself; "so that Clarice becomes mistress here, it matters little whether she reigns alone, or as queen consort."

It was not often Hubert Cliffe gave himself up to reflection, but this morning he seemed to be in a thoughtful mood, for he remained for quite half-an-hour where his uncle had left him, then suddenly got up, and looked very earnestly through the open window at a small, light figure walking down the avenue.

His listless manner vanished as if by magic, and after waiting a few minutes until the person—whoever she might be—was hidden from view by the trees, he put on his hat, stepped out of the window, at being the easiest mode of exit, and sauntered slowly along until he was out of view of the house; then he quickened his pace, and came up with Arline—for it was she—just as she entered the wood on her way to the village.

"You are a quick walker, Miss Lester; I have had hard work to catch you up," he said, with his sunny smile, noticing what a violent start she gave as she heard his voice.

She paused a moment, then said,—

"Am I wanted at the Court?"

"No; why?" he asked, surprised at the question.

"I know of no other motive that should have induced you to walk fast in order to speak to me," she rejoined, her voice very cold and steady.

When a young woman, who has all her life been accustomed to show her thoughts and feelings without restraint, suddenly finds herself called upon to act a part with a view to

concealment, it not unfrequently happens that she overdoes it. Arline fell into that mistake now.

Hubert looked at her in disconcerted silence, then put up his hand to conceal the half-smile that came on his lips.

"It is not possible that I might wish to give myself the pleasure of your society for a little while?"

Arline turned upon him quickly.

"It is possible, of course, but if you had the desire, it was one you had no business to attempt to gratify."

"Why not?"

The colour flamed brightly into her cheeks, and he could see by the rising and falling of the little gold brooch that pinned her collar how rapidly her heart was beating, too quickly, indeed, to allow of speech.

She walked on, carrying her head well erect, while the red sunset that slanted through the trees touched the soft bloom of her cheeks, brought out the gold tints in her hair, lingered about her lovingly, as if it knew what a fair thing she was, and was loth to part from her.

It was very lovely here in the wood, in the mellow silence of the autumn afternoon. Trees, many of the leaves had fallen and strewed the ground, but enough still remained on the trees to prevent their looking wintry, and the russet and orange hues of the chestnuts were lighted up by the sunbeams into a wonderful brilliancy of ruddy colouring.

It was very still too—no sound to be heard save the soft cooing of a dove to its mate, and the murmur of falling water away in the distance.

"I wanted to see you for a specific object," said Hubert, presently. "For the last week or so it seems to me you have purposely avoided me, and when I have tried to speak to you, you have answered in monosyllables, and gone away as quickly as you could. Have I offended you?"

He waited a minute, and tried to look into her face, but she turned it aside, and he could only see the delicate, rounded outline of cheek and chin.

"Indeed," he added, softly, "I would not do or say anything to annoy you for all the world. Do you believe me?"

"No!"

"No!" she repeated, in astonishment. "What reason have you for doubting it?"

"I need not enter into my reasons," she said, icily; "they cannot possibly be of interest to you."

"But they are!" he interrupted.

"Perhaps, in so far as they amuse you!" she added, with a bitter smile, whose meaning he did not understand.

"You puzzle me, Miss Lester. Do you know you are as unlike the girl who walked through this wood with me once before—you remember, when you sprained your ankle?—as—as"—he paused for a smile, and then went on. "What has caused the change—has anyone been speaking to you against me? Ah! I see I have hit the mark at last. Do you think it is fair to condemn me unheeded?"

Arline came to a standstill, and faced him, rather white, but with a steadfast look in her sweet, luminous eyes.

"Mr. Cliffe, I will speak to you plainly; it is perhaps best I should, and yet I can say nothing to you that you don't already know, for you must surely be aware that between you and me society has fixed a barrier, and if you attempt to overstep it you do the power that raised it; in other words, I have been wrong to allow you to talk to me as you have done. It was kind of you to try and lessen my loneliness"—her voice faltered a little—"but all the same, it was liable to subject me to remark, and so I am resolved it shall be put an end to!"

"Someone has been talking to you!" he exclaimed, quickly. "I suspected it at first,

but now I am sure of it. It was my cousin perhaps."

"That is a matter of no importance beside the fact," she went on, without heeding him. "If anyone has spoken to me, it has been in kindness, and all I can ask of you is to please not to allow occasion for it in future."

"You mean I am not to speak to you again?"

"No more than is necessary—no more than Lord Cliffe does."

"And you wish me to leave you now?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean what you say?"

"I do—absolutely."

"Wait a moment!" he exclaimed, catching hold of her arm, and bringing her to a standstill. "If this is really the last time we meet in private I must not let you go away with a wrong impression concerning me. I have sought your society because I took pleasure in it, and I thought—I thought the pleasure was mutual!"

He paused, and Arline stood perfectly still, her eyes bent on the ground.

"I fancied you liked talking to me better than to Mrs. Belton, between whom and yourself there could be no bond of union, whereas you and I have many, very many, tastes in common. I liked talking to you because you are pure and sweet, and true, and I always felt myself a better man in your presence; but if I had imagined that by so doing I was causing you annoyance I would have stopped away altogether. Another thing"—his voice dropped into a lower key, and he came a little nearer—"I fancied you liked me—was I wrong?"

Instead of replying Arline attempted to shake herself free from his clasp.

"Loose me, Mr. Cliffe! Don't you see you are detaining me against my will?"

"I beg your pardon"—with deep humility, but still holding her arm—"I will let you go directly you have answered my question."

"It was a question you had no right to ask."

"Perhaps not, but having asked it, I must insist on a reply."

"Insist, Mr. Cliffe! You are making use of strange language."

"I am in a strange mood."

"That will hardly excuse your ungentlemanly conduct."

"It ought to, then, for the feelings that sway me were held as a power long before society had decreed what 'gentlemanly conduct' meant."

His grasp held her like iron, and his eyes never wavered in their steadfast regard. Her anger had brought a crimson flush to her face, her scarlet lips quivered, her bosom was heaving—she looked most lovely in her excitement.

"Again I ask you to let me go!"

"And again I say I cannot until I have had an answer to my question."

"You shall have it then!" she exclaimed, passionately, turning her flashing eyes full upon him, and losing all self-control in her sore displeasure, "I do not like you—not at all, not one bit—I believe I hate you!"

She made a swift movement that would have set her free, but he was even quicker. Still holding her with his right hand he threw his left round her waist, and drew her to him, close, closer, until her face was against his shoulder. Then he bent down, and, in spite of her struggles, pressed his lips to hers.

There was a rustle in the bushes not far away—a hare, or rabbit, perhaps—but he heard it, and involuntarily loosened his hold, and Arline, like an arrow shot from a bow, ran swiftly along the narrow path, and never stopped until she got out of the wood, and close to the village which was her destination.

But before she reached it she sat down on the greenward that bordered the road, and indulged in the feminine solace of a good cry.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mrs. BELTON being, on the whole, a charitable and kindly woman, had undertaken on behalf of Lord Cliffe (whose purse was ever open to the needy) to care for the sick poor in the village, and, in her absence, this charge was delegated to Arline, who very readily fulfilled it.

It was to see a little sick child, supposed to be dying, that she had come out this afternoon, bringing with her some jellies and grapes, with a little wine, packed up in a basket she carried on her arm.

She did not go to the cottage entrance, but stayed until she had gained the mastery over the indignation which she naturally felt at Hubert's outrageous and inexplicable behaviour.

What madness had possessed him to act in such a way was beyond her power to imagine; the mere thought of his behaviour brought hot, angry blushing to her cheeks, mingled with an untold shame that he should have dared to put upon her such an indignity.

She fully made up her mind now that she must leave the Court at once, and was already planning where she should go, for to remain under the same roof as Hubert was, of course, out of the question.

The little child she went to see was worse—would not last the night, so said her mother, who begged Arline to remain, for she was quite alone, and grew back with the feeling of cold dread we all experience from meeting that terrible visitor, who was already so close to her threshold.

The little patient, too, whose senses were wandering, grasped Arline's hand and would not let it go—she had been dreaming of angels, and fancied one had come down to visit her—and it would have required a harder heart than our heroine's to tear herself away under such circumstances.

As it was, she stayed on and on, until night came, and then it seemed to her there was a slight change for the better in the condition of the little girl, who fell into a deep slumber, during which Arline took the opportunity of leaving the cottage.

As she got outside she heard the church clock striking ten; but Mrs. Belton, guessing the true state of affairs, had had the foresight to send a servant to walk home with her, so the journey back to the Court would not be so lonely.

The way by the road was much the longer of the two, so Arline decided on the one by which she had come in the afternoon—that leading through the wood.

It was very dark under the shadow of the trees, for there was no moon, and all the light that filtered through the branches, came from the stars shining between the rifts in the clouds.

No sound disturbed the quietude, except at intervals the shrill, harsh scream of an owl wandering about in search of food for its young ones' supper, or some other night-bird seeking for prey.

Before they had gone very far Arline regretted she had chosen this path; she was, as a rule, very brave, but the utter stillness, combined with the dense shadow, gave her a weird sense of loneliness, and unconsciously she quickened her footsteps, wishing herself safely back at the Court.

All of a sudden a dark figure sprang out from behind a tree, and caught hold of her arm, standing before her in the path so as to intercept her progress.

The shriek she would have uttered was paralysed by sheer fright, and she stood perfectly still, unable, indeed, to move, until a face peered down into hers, and a voice she had never heard, with an accent of surprise:

"Why, it is Miss Lester!"

"Who did you think it was, pray?" she asked, as Hubert Cliffe released her.

"Hush!" he said, in a low tone. "Don't speak above a whisper. There are poachers in the wood, and we stand a very good chance



["LOOSE ME, MR. CLIFFE, DON'T YOU SEE YOU ARE DETAINING ME AGAINST MY WILL?"]

of trapping them at last, for they think all the keepers are at a servants' party at the Court, and are therefore off their guard. But what brings you here at this time of night?" he added, curiously.

Arline told him as briefly and succinctly as she could.

"It is a pity you chose this path, for you will not be able to go through the wood now," he observed. "A stray shot might strike you, for Heaven knows what may happen! Who have you with you?"

"One of the housemaids."

"That is no protection," dissatisfiedly, "and I cannot accompany you myself. You had better go back to the village, and get a conveyance from the inn; it is much too late for you to be out alone. I will come with you to the entrance of the wood."

But to this Arline objected, and in such terms that it was impossible for him to press his company upon her; she and the servant, therefore, turned back immediately, leaving him there, but before they reached the gate that gave egress from the wood, their footsteps were arrested by the sharp report of a gun, and this was immediately followed by two others; then came the sound of voices raised in angry altercation, another report, a shout for help, a deep groan, then silence.

Arline and her companion stood still, and the latter, an ignorant country girl, frightened half out of her wits, took to her heels, and ran as fast as she could in the direction of the village, while our heroine hesitated, her heart almost ceasing its beating in her terror and anxiety—terror, not for herself, but for Hubert.

Suppose the groan came from him—suppose he were shot, wounded, dying perhaps.

All thought of the insult he had put upon her vanished, only the remembrance that he might be in danger remained; and without an idea of self, of the risk she was incurring, or the danger that threatened her from stray shots, she made her way back to the place

where she had left him, and then stood still, uncertain how to proceed.

Here it was darker than ever with the night shadows, through which the starshine could not penetrate, and only the mysterious murmur of the branches, as the wind swept through them, broke the silence that reigned. She peered round carefully in the hope of finding some clue to guide her, but in vain.

"Mr. Cliffe?" she whispered, at last—then, raising her voice—"Mr. Cliffe!"

"Is that you, Arline?" said a faint voice, near.

"Yes; where are you?"

"Down here; underneath the tree to your right."

She groped her way, uncertain as to the direction, and he could trace her movements by the glimmer of her white linen cuffs, and a little chita crêpe shawl she had twisted round her throat.

"Kneel down!" he said, his voice only just audible, and she obeyed, and put out her right hand, round which his fingers weakly closed.

"Are you hurt, Mr. Cliffe?"

"Yes."

"Badly?"

"Very badly."

She drew a quick, sobbing breath, and her hands trembled; she could not speak.

"Are you sorry for me, Arline?"

No answer.

"This is no time for cherishing malice, little girl," went on Hubert, slowly and painfully. "At moments like these, injuries are forgiven and forgotten."

There was a pause, and then he continued—

"Should you believe at my death?"

"Don't speak like that, don't talk of death!"

"But suppose I must, Arline; suppose I stand quite close to the dark stream?"

A long shuddering sigh ran through her whole frame, and involuntary her hand tightened its hold on his.

"I want to ask your pardon for what I did this afternoon," he added, still slowly, and at long intervals. "I was going to say something to you that might have excused it, but you ran away so quickly, I hadn't time. I couldn't help kissing you, Arline, though I know it was wrong. Do you forgive me?"

"Yes."

"Freely, fully, without reservation?"

"Freely, fully," she repeated, half mechanically, while her hot tears fell like rain over his hands.

"And those cruel words you uttered, that declaration of dislike. You know you said you hated me," he added, breaking abruptly; "did you mean it?

She was silent.

"Tell me, Arline!" he went on, half raising himself, in his excitement, while his voice grew eager and impassioned. "Remember that this is perhaps the last time I shall ever speak to you; this time to-morrow there may be a gulf between us that cannot be bridged over! Did you mean what you said?"

"No!"

"Not at all; not one word?"

"Not at all; not one word!" she exclaimed, vehemently, all desire for concealing her weakness vanishing in this supreme moment.

"Then, darling, prove by kissing me of your own free will."

She obeyed without hesitation; there was no time for hesitation now, when each moment might be bearing away his life; and there, in the dim wooded solitudes, in the quiet hush of the night, all conventionalities were forgotten, and as lip pressed lip so heart spoke to heart.

For them Time existed no longer—the world was forgotten—the artificial barriers of society ignored. They only knew they were young, and tasting of life's purest elixir—the magic draught that brings oblivion to all save its own delight.

(To be continued.)



["WILL YOU COME, MISS STANTON?" SAID EUGENE, WITHOUT A GLANCE AT ALGY.]

NOVELITE.]

HOW SHE ATONED.

CHAPTER I.

ONE afternoon in September the one London train that stopped at King's Lea drew up in the little station. One or two people got out, evidently having come from intermediate stations, and a girl, standing on the platform, shook her head as they passed her, and even remarked to the groom near her—"I'm afraid we've had the ponies out for nothing, Jim; I don't see her"—when a tall, slim girl stepped leisurely from a first-class carriage, and, after giving a direction to the one porter, came towards the expectant young lady.

"Ella!" said a clear voice, with anything but a country accent—"Jim, how are you?"

"Oh!" cried the other, wheeling round and grasping a delicate pair of dark grey gloves enclosing small hands; "you darling, here you are at last," while Jim grinned delightedly, and went to attend to the luggage. That was soon stowed.

"I had quite given you up," said the rector's daughter, as she and the London cousin walked to the little pony chaise.

"You did not see me, then? Shall we walk, Ellie, and let Jim go on? It is so fine, and I love every step of the way."

"Are you so glad to be at dear old King's Lea, then, after two years' absence?" said Ella, pleased.

"So glad—it is rest," answered the other, lifting her face to the blue sky with a deep breath.

Ella glanced at her questioningly, but said nothing, and they started, Jim driving on quickly. May Stanton walked for some minutes as if the mere enjoyment of movement and sweet-scented air were enough, flinging her head up every now and then to meet the breeze with the delight in no one so keen as in the city bred. Her eye went con-

tinually over all the features of the landscape, dwelling on them as one to whom each point is familiar and dear. In truth, she had passed the happiest days in her life here, for her visits to her uncle's home were her bright spots.

"Why, Ella," said she, "if we have weather like this it will be splendid. Fancy, up here in the north-country, having such a warm September!"

"It's fine now. Yes, and I hope it may continue, but the weather has been very changeable, and we are promised storms."

"Never mind, we'll cry over them when they come. Ellie, look, there's the haunted Tower—used to belong to that old Shirley—just as dreary as in his time. I am sure there are ghosts there," said May, with a shudder. "Look at it—the sun never seems to shine on it—all those gloomy trees round it."

"Ghosts, May! You used to believe in them when you were a child, but you don't now, do you?" said Ella, laughing.

"Certainly—why not? That place always looked to me as if it were cursed."

"It looks as if the owners had been very silly," said Ella, "building it down in the valley where that turbulent river of ours can rush over it in the rain-storms so easily—and has before now. Besides, there is the reservoir now—think if that were to burst! The Tower would go."

"It's safe enough."

"I don't know. They say the foundations have been a good deal undermined by the overflows, and it might not be quite so sure next time there are floods. But I expect that's nonsense."

"It's very old," said May, "but it's such a horrid place—with that story of the murder, and its ghosts and its gloom, that it had much better be swept away."

"Don't say that, May; someone is living there."

"I thought no one but old Shirley could ever put up with it. The man who lives there

must be either a misanthrope or mad, I should think," said May, conclusively.

"I don't know much about him," said Ellie, "and he's not been here long. He isn't north-country at all—comes from the South, and immediately from abroad, I hear. There's only a man servant and one old woman there. He may be a misanthrope, but he isn't mad. Mr. Shirley was a relation, and left it to Mr. Delacourt, so that it might remain in the family."

"Mr. who?" asked May, sharply.

"Delacourt. Why, do you know the name? Jim says he looks no end of a swell. Have you met him?"

"I don't know—perhaps," said the girl, faintly; and standing to gaze at the gloomy Tower locked her hands passionately together, oblivious of her cousin's presence. She had recovered herself almost directly—four London seasons teach self-control—and walking on, said quietly, "I met a Mr. Delacourt in London two seasons ago—used to know him, but it may not be the same. He had no north-country connections that I know of."

Some intuition in her own mind made Ella understand what was in May's—the wish to learn more without revealing the wish.

"There is something more beneath the surface," thought she, while she answered her cousin, "Probably he did not know of them himself. Mr. Shirley in his last illness, when my father attended him, used to talk about 'Eugene,' something he wanted 'Eugene' to do or be, and I suppose that must have been this Mr. Delacourt, as he came to the funeral and remained afterwards."

Ella stole a glance at her cousin, as the not very common Christian name left her lips. May's colour had risen slightly, but her brows were knitted, and her head lifted a little defiantly.

"Yes," said she, suffering a pause to ensue after Ella's explanation, "it is the same I knew in London."

They were nearing the Rectory; shortly they

entered its pretty garden, and were met in the hall by Mr. Stanton himself.

He always called May his second daughter, and greeted her as such. Then they all went in, and were presently seated in the dining-room at "high tea," during which May's tongue was not idle.

She had spent a brilliant season in London, and had much to tell them of her doings, talking vivaciously, and often laughing; yet Ella felt uneasy—it seemed to her that her beautiful cousin had been mentally disturbed—by what?

May Stanton certainly was beautiful, with the undimmed lustre of earliest girlhood. This made her look younger than her three-and-twenty years, and in part counteracted what is apt to make faces appear older—an excessive pride.

This had not yet produced hardness, but it needed all the gracious curves of the face, and the velvet darkness of the eyes to nullify it even in part.

May had not passed unscathed through the trying ordeal of finding herself a society darling. From the minute her bow had been made to Royalty she was a dazzling star, and her naturally exacting temper, intolerant of opposition, felt the influence at once. She was another creature in the whirl of London society to what she was in the brief visits to King's Lea, and yet changed so little in essentials from the child, who would have been less loveable if her uncle's firm and kindly rule had not brought out all that was best in her. In this atmosphere May seemed subdued, simple, self-forgetful, all her nature in harmony.

To-night Ella thought her restless; professing herself glad to be "at home," as she called it, yet with no ring of joy in her voice. And what had meant that yearning tone, that upward look of the answer—

"It is rest!"

"She won't want to meet Mr. Delacourt, I am perfectly certain," thought Miss Ella, when she had seen her guest to her room. "Yet to-morrow we go to the Walsingham's tennis-party, and they told me he would be there. Oh, May! my bonnie wilful cousin, what have you been doing? I had better casually let her know she may meet him, and then she can choose whether she will go or not."

This was adroitly managed at the breakfast-table. May said, "she should be very pleased to go—she had brought a lovely tennis dress," and drank her fragrant coffee as if that were all her present engrossment. Ella was half-inclined to think she had been worrying herself about nothing, but drove off in the afternoon to the Walsingham's, with a nervous dread of what might happen.

CHAPTER II.

Nothing but what was pleasant seemed possible in these sunlit gardens, filled with well-dressed people. It was not prosaic, but, still, for any underlying romance to have come to the surface would have been an incongruity.

May herself, picturesque as she was in her bright beauty, did not look the subject for the sort of romance Ella had weaved. She looked of the world—exquisitely dressed, faultless in manner and bearing, the woman of society—not the woman who could spend her whole nature in love, or wreck her life for some passionate self-assertion.

The mysterious inhabitant of the Tower formed the subject of much talk. He had been but a short while in the place, and had been seen chiefly at long distances, evidently on a solitary ramble. He had called on no one—only left cards in return of the calls made on him. He had declined invitations with some courteous excuse, so that the hostess was surprised hers had been accepted—only last night though.

"Perhaps he is tired of being a misanthrope," said she, "and no wonder. I hear

he is young, and we know he is used to the best London society, so of course he feels the difference whatap there with his man and two female servants. What does he do with himself?"

"Is he a broken-hearted lover?" asked Ella, laughing.

"I thought," answered the country dame, "these London young men never broke their hearts—horrid place, London! Dear me, Ella! that must be him. Do go and fetch Mr. Walsingham while I receive this misanthrope."

The young man, who was ushered by the servant on to the lawn, did not look misanthropical. For one thing he had the air of cities—not that of a *Awful-star* from the haunts of men. Then the *misanthrope*, whom with grace that made it doubly handsome, was anything but the grub of the man who forswears his fellow-creatures. Neither had he unkempt locks and a beard of long growth—he wore no beard, and the curly abundant hair was evidently coaxed by Hell and slightly made, singularly handsome in face, he was the extreme opposite of either misanthrope or a serious lover. He met Mrs. Walsingham with a smile which relieved a certain sombreness in his face, and she, while giving him all manner of hospitable welcome, secretly thought with delight what an acquisition he would be to their fashionable society. "If I can only make the day pleasant enough to induce him to come amongst us. There is that handsome May; she is attraction enough for any man."

"We shall be making up our sides shortly," said she, after Mr. Walsingham had come in, and after a warm greeting—for he was Yorkshire to the backbone—had been called in. "You play, of course, Mr. Delacourt?"

"Yes—I used to play in the Wimbledon matches before I went abroad," answered the young man, giving more than one quick glance over the groups at a little distance. "I am quite at your service, Mrs. Walsingham! Ah, there is Mr. Stanton; I have had the pleasure of meeting him."

"Indeed! I thought you were quite a stranger."

"I saw him at the time of Mr. Shirley's death—not since, save passing. Mr. Stanton," said he, stepping forward as the rector stood near, "may I claim acquaintance?"

"His hand was instantly grasped,—

"Very pleased to see you here; you're sure of a good game, and the finest grapes in the country," said Mr. Stanton laughing. "I am sorry I cannot stay long enough for us to become better friends. I must make my daughter my substitute."

"Come and be introduced then," said the lady of the house.

Ella and May were standing together as Mrs. Walsingham approached, and Ella instinctively glanced at her cousin, but apparently May did not notice who was with the hostess—indeed, she was not looking that way. Ella, after a second's rapid thought, touched her—she would assure her all she could.

"May, here is Mr. Delacourt!" she whispered.

May's large eyes dilated. Ella was certain she started, but either she had great self-control, or the romance had no existence, for the girl gave no sign of recognition; and when Mrs. Walsingham proceeded to introduce Delacourt, uttered no word to show she had ever seen him before. She only bowed, with eyes bent down; he, if there were any concealment, took his cue admirably, and claimed no prior acquaintance.

"Yet I fancy they have met before," thought Ella; "but I might as well try to storm a citadel as force my proud cousin's confidence."

The sides were made up, and the choice of players put May Stanton and Eugene Delacourt on opposite sides, for the first time in their lives. Whatever memories they had neither showed any sign. Delacourt played as if he had no thoughts but for the game, winning for himself golden opinions, and for his

side triumphs that redoubled the efforts of the opponents. As for May, she had never played better, nor seemed more bent on winning, but it was not to be, the game was not with her. May might have wished for victory, but she did not allow defeat to disconcert her. She led the way—whom did she ever follow? to the tent, where fruit and claret cups were in waiting, and talked and laughed till the time.

"Mr. Delacourt," said Ella, when he had supplied her with what she wanted, "I don't think we should have won but for you. May congratulate you on your very good play?"

"You are very flattering, Miss Stanton, and I don't say I don't merit because you would not believe me, nor that it is not welcome, for who would be careless about praise so given?—but at the same time you know the best officer in the world is helpless without good soldiers."

She smiled at this speech, uttered with a mixture of whimsicality and gallantry.

"I suppose you have played a great deal?" she said.

She did not notice that May was near, talking to a group of men. Whether Delacourt noticed the fact or not no one could have told. He answered,

"Yes, I often play'd in the matches at Wimbledon."

"Indeed! My cousin May played there, too, a great deal one season," said Ella, as she gave him back her empty glass.

In moving slightly to put it down Delacourt lifted his eyes and met May's full.

There was in them warning, defiance—a momentary gleam. "Oppose my will if you dare," said those beautiful, proud eyes, that had still no touch of their old power over him. They had looked at him sedately then—look it had seemed worth while to die for. This almost menacing glance had not that magic away, and yet, despite himself, he was fain to obey it.

He turned to Ella again.

"She is a better friend than enemy," he said, with a smiling lip and a double meaning in the words, springing from the bitterness in his heart. "Shall we go on to the lawn again, Miss Stanton?"

May's light, merry laugh fell on their ears as they passed to the door of the tent.

She nodded carelessly at her cousin, and said she, too, was going into the sunshine, and swept out behind them, attended by an escort of cavaliers.

They could not complain of favouritism—the London belle made no distinctions, dealing her favours of arch glances and witching smiles to all alike.

The man before her set his teeth as the silver tones came to him. Still so dear, then, that she could vex him like this? Or was it the pride of possession that could not grow reconciled to the prize being open to others?

It was not long after that he went to make his adieu to his hostess. He thanked her for a pleasant afternoon, knowing all the while he uttered a mere form—for he had, mark ye, over-calculated his strength, and the very one for whose sake he had broken through his recluse habits was driving him away.

Aud, lo! as he left Mrs. Walsingham, and turned into a green alley leading to a side-gate, there, almost in his path, was the woman whose hold he could never shake loose.

He stood still, white to the lips, and looked up straight into his face without a blush or a quiver.

Neither had been blameless for their parting—how was it, then, that the woman showed no trace of emotion, unless she had ceased to love him? Did she wear the mask that her pride might hide her heart?

But the man recovered himself instantly.

"I am glad we have met," he said, with a slight inclination, "where it is possible to ask of you an explanation. Why is it your pleasure that the world should believe we are strangers?"

"It is my pleasure, Mr. Delacourt. I believe in England the lady makes recog-

nition?—or have you been so long away that you have forgotten that custom?" May said, coolly.

"The reproof is unjust, but it shall be as you wish, as far as I can with truth——"

"You can't you must," exclaimed May, imperiously. "Do I want these country babblers pulling the past to pieces, showing up my folly? It is over and done with—it is buried out of sight, forgotten! You, a scion of gentry—her tips curled with a sneer—"must you say yes and no like a school child? Can you take no middle path between an untruth and a truth that must offend a woman?"

"I am not ashamed of that past," said Delacourt, sternly. "But I will not offend you again. I will remember that you have asked of me a grace."

"You accused me just now of injustice—but women, they say, have no sense of justice. Do men equally fail in generosity?" she said, deliberately, with her gaze fixed immovably on his face.

She was glad that she had stung him. She knew it by the averted eyes and hot colour that flushed his cheek.

"I was never your match in a war of words," he said, after a minute. "Have your triumph, such as it is. We were both foolish to dream that life could ever run smoothly for us together! Let the folly be buried, as you say. I was wrong to say I had no shame for the past. I am ashamed of the weakness that could dream of perfection and believe in love like a cred!"

"Oh, let us have done with reprobation. If there is blame I do not stand alone. Women may be inconsistent, but I am certain men are no better. We made a mistake, like hundreds of others, that is all. Why not acknowledge it?"

"I do acknowledge it—thoroughly. And I also acknowledge it was well the mistake was found out before it was too late."

"Certainly—of course," she said, carelessly. But she was angry—angry that he had so taken up her words.

The woman's love of power was strong in her.

It was hard to be forced to see that she could not play with her lover as she chose. He had stood beseated all this time. He now made a movement as if to replace his hat preparatory to going, but there was something to be said first.

"Is it to be peace or war?" he said. "I am at your orders."

"Peace, of course. Did I not say I wanted no gossip—at least while I am here?" answered May. "Besides, we have no quarrel—that is over!"

"Then I have the honour to wish you good evening."

He passed her with a bow, and left the gardens.

May resisted her impulse to turn and look after him, but stood still in the path where he had left her.

What a formal farewell! Two years ago he had held both her hands and looked into her eyes, and his "Good-night, love," had filled her heart with its sweetness. How cold this seemed—how bitterly cold!

"It is better we parted!" she said, tossing her head back as if to fling away the thought of those other times, and went quickly down the walk. "He wanted a slave, and a slave I will never be! He chose not to trust me, and perfect trust I will have. Why has he come here? Why did he come to this house to day? If I meet him often I vow I will make him wish he had never seen me again!"

CHAPTER III.

MADGE WILLSON, Delacourt's old nurse, came that evening into an almost dark room to lower the blinds and light the lamp, and see if her young master was in.

The maid under her had been granted a

holiday, so Madge came herself to perform these duties.

She had insisted on coming with her master to this somewhat tumble-down old tower, determined that he should have one friend beside him in this lonely life he had chosen to lead since his return from abroad and the death of his old relation.

Madge had been almost mother as well as nurse to the motherless lad, and was, besides, so thoroughly superior a person—belonging to the yeoman class—that she had never been to Eugene like a dependent.

She knew all that had driven him from England, and had hailed his return with delight, and she refused pointblank to let him remain alone in King's Lea.

This evening she almost cried out as, coming up to the window, she saw a dark form sitting there.

"Madge," said Delacourt's soft voice, as she recoiled, "is that you? did I startle you? I am sorry."

"It doesn't matter," said Madge. "I did not know you were in, that is all. Have you been long home? Why didn't you ring for lights?"

"I have been in some hours. I did not want lights. Don't bring them, please, Madge; the dark is pleasanter."

"But it's lonely, my dear," said she, coming nearer. "What made you leave the garden party so early? That's not like what you used to be, Mr. Eugene."

"Because I'm a fool," was the short reply. "And you've seen Miss May?"

"Yes."

"How did you know she was here?"

"I saw her go by with her cousin. I knew her cousin was going to this party, and I thought—well, I need not explain. You marvelled why I so suddenly accepted this invitation, and now I wish I had not. You have blamed me before for remembering her still, but what is the use of that? Foolish or wise, weak or strong, it comes to the same thing—she is still to me all she was."

"All! Then why did you quarrel with her? why not make it up now?" said Madge, laying her hand on the curly head. "You know, my dear, I don't know quite all the rights of the story, and I daresay you acted for the best, but where there's love it seems so easy to overlook faults."

"Madge," said the young man, "I don't think she could have loved me at all—not as I loved her. To-day she was hard and scornful. Did I never tell you the reason why we parted? I thought you would guess, and I could scarcely bear to speak of it even to you. It was my doing—at least partly. It was so simple a thing. I never thought it would lead to this. You remember that fellow who used to be about town two seasons ago—Lester Davenport? He went everywhere—no door was shut against him. The women thought him all the more of a hero because he was a bit of a *roué*. A bit of a *roué*! Madge, I knew him to be an utter scoundrel. Twice at least he had crept into men's houses and destroyed them. He led a scandalous life—he was not fit to go much as touch a woman's hand. I asked May not to meet him. I was not jealous. I did not mistrust her. She said it was nonsense, everyone received him; I was jealous, that was all. We had more than one quarrel about it. She would not believe me. She was asked to a house where he was to be for the autumn."

"Yes, I remember that. She went?"

"She would go. Then I told her she could not love me to defy me like that, and if she refused to obey me in this I would be no woman's slave, and yield a just right to her whims. It was not alone the utter scoffing of my wishes, the persistent assertion that I mistrusted her, the disbelief in all my protestations—it was that I cannot believe a girl could do all this and yet love a man. And, besides, from the time we were engaged, there seemed always disagreements and cross-purposes. What I have told you was only the culminating

point. I suppose we were both too high-tempered and proud."

"Are you sure you were gentle with her about Mr. Davenport? It might have been girlish perversity, and her heart have been true enough all the time," said Madge, convinced in her own mind that her darling could not have erred very far, and May was not half good enough for him.

"She never loved me. She never could have said to me the things she did if she had. Perhaps I was not altogether as gentle as I might have been, but she has gone too far for me ever to acknowledge it. I will never stoop so low as that, if I break my heart for it."

"Ah, Eugenie, pride has broken more hearts than ever confession has," said Madge, sadly. "I'm older than you, dear. I took you a child from your mother's arms the night she died, and I know you're hot-tempered and wilful, and never would brook contradiction. Is there no way of making this up again?"

"I will never utter a word to her as long as I live," said Delacourt, with the rashness of youth. "The woman who can do as she does is no wife for me."

"Yet you linger here—where Miss May lived often."

"Well, I told you I was a fool," said Delacourt, turning his face a little aside.

"Is it fair to her to stay now she is here?" Madge asked. "I think she was very wrong; but still, dear, even if she did not care for you it might be hard for her to meet you."

"I might have thought so once; I cannot after to-day."

"She is a very wicked girl," exclaimed Madge, with a sudden burst of the anger that had been long smouldering against May. "I wish—"

Delacourt started up, and the light from the pale rising moon fell on his face; it was full of passionate pain.

"Madge, you must not blame her," he said. "I cannot, I will not hear it. If I speak to you of her it is only that at times I can scarcely endure silence. I will never utter even her name to you if you say a word against her. How can a man forget in two short years all the glory of his life; nay, to his grave shall he not remember?"

He turned to the window abruptly. Madge followed him.

"Eugene, my own boy," she said, almost crying, "you know it was only love for you made me speak. I wouldn't give you a minute's hurt if I could help it."

Delacourt threw his arms round her.

"I know that," he said, tenderly. "Forgive me; I was not angry, but I know I said too much."

His kiss healed whatever sore his words had made, and Madge left him consoled.

He sank back into his old attitude. He was not proud of himself for the course he had taken—to come back from his wandering life abroad and bury himself in this Yorkshire village, because over these hills and moors May's feet had run, and she had breathed this air.

There was lack of energy, lack of that very pride that had helped to bring about his position, and he knew it keenly. But the wrench of his whole life had left him weak. He could not gather his old strength all at once, and when he might have done so May herself came again before him. It was useless then to strive, for he loved her still.

* * * * *

"Like Mr. Delacourt!" repeated May, answering her cousin's question, "no, I don't."

They were in May's bedroom that same night, whether Ella had gone for the midnight chat said to be dear to feminine hearts. Not that it was yet midnight; they kept early hours up here, and the church clock had just struck eleven.

"Not like him!" repeated Ella. "I think

he is delightful, and everyone is chanting his praises."

"I am not fond of following everyone. I don't like him."

"But you hardly spoke to him."

May had been leaning against the window-lintel, pulling at the climbing plant without; she turned now, and looked straight at Ella.

"I see you guess something," she said, "and I suppose you may as well know the whole. Sit down, and I'll tell you. I can't tell it smoothly. I hate him—I mean I don't like him—now, but it wasn't so once, two years ago."

The cadence of these three words told Ella what May would sooner have died than let her know.

Ella said, earnestly,—

"May, darling, I don't want to know anything, indeed."

"Yes, you had better," said the girl, restlessly, "but keep it to yourself. I meant no one to know we had ever met, but I must waive that with you. Well, as perhaps you know, we—we were lovers once—engaged."

Her voice faltered. She broke off half savagely a bough of the plant, and began snapping the twigs off while she spoke.

"I don't know how it began. I was perfectly happy at first; there was no one like him. Then our wills began to cross. I thought he deserved too much, and my brother used to say I ordered him, and no man would stand it. He said I was too fond of showing power. Anyhow, we two were always disagreeing, and I never could make out how it was. Then he took into his head that a certain Lester Davenport was no fit company for me or any girl. That was nonsense, for everyone I knew received him; even my brother and sister-in-law had to meet him out, though they didn't like it. Eugene said this man ought to be turned out of any decent house. He never spoke to him himself. He wanted me not to meet him. I wasn't the least bit taken with this Davenport, Ella, but I believe Eugene was afraid of his fascinations, for he was fascinating—and jealous—"

"But," said Ella, quietly, "I think Mr. Delacourt could hold his own as to personal charm against most men."

"I know, I knew it then. I thought Eugene a hero, I can assure you, but I could not see what right he had to choose my acquaintance."

"Did he tell you his reasons?"

"Yes. I will say for him he was just there. He had not that man's folly of thinking girls know nothing of those things that are done and must take on faith what is told them. He told me as much as was possible."

" Didn't you believe him?"

"Oh, yes; I dare say some of it was true, but he expected me to give way directly, and I maintained that it was very ridiculous to make a fuss about what everyone did. Well, at last I was asked to a country house where Mr. Davenport was also to be. I told Eugene I had been asked. He said, 'May, you won't go?' And, oh, Ella! if he had said it differently I might have yielded, but it was half a command, and we had parted a few nights before coldly because I would not be coerced, and I thought he did not trust me. That made me wild. I said defiantly, 'Yes, I shall, why not?' He said some things then, Ella, that I hate to think of—he can be terribly stern when he likes. They were not true. I did love him, and he said I could not, or I should have cared more for his wishes. I said they were absurd wishes, and showed mistrust, that I believed it was simply because he was jealous."

"Oh, May!" cried Ella.

"Why shouldn't I? You think a girl is to be her lover's humble slave; I wouldn't be that to my husband."

"I do not think that; but you were cruel to him, and he had right on his side."

"He was cruel first," said May, obstinately, "and he had no right to expect me to think

exactly as he did. After that, of course, we quarrelled, and I don't know which first spoke of parting."

She pressed her hand to her forehead with a little shudder.

"Yes, I do. It was I—I drew off his betrothal ring, and—and threw it on the floor. He did not move for a minute, and I did not look at him. I knew I had roused him to the utmost, and that was not little. Then he stepped forwards, and I thought he was going to pick up the ring, but he crushed it under his heel. He said—he said—"

She caught her breath with a half-sob, then gave a short, hard laugh.

"I am stupid," she said. "I suppose I cared then, and the memory is painful. Let me see. He said—oh, I remember; but I bore you, Ella."

"No, no; go on, pray."

"Girls always like a love-story, particularly if it's tragic," said May, half-contemptively. "'You never loved me,' he said. 'In frank Heaven I know it now.' And I said, 'Yes, it is better, of course.'

"You remember every word," said Ella, who listened breathlessly. "You have repeated his words in the very way he must have said them."

"Did I? Dramatic instinct, my dear. He did it very well, too—a gentleman all through."

"May, hush! you shock me! You can talk like that of such a terrible scene!"

"Terrible! Not at all—melodramatic. I shouldn't fling down a ring like that now. It was a lovely diamond, too. Harry was awfully angry, and so was Annie, but as they hadn't got to marry Eugene I couldn't see that it mattered to them. It was out of the question to put up with that dictatorial sort of thing."

"Yet," said Ella, who could not help being indignant with this beautiful, perverse creature, "you acknowledge yourself that Harry never met Mr. Davenport unless he was obliged."

"So was I obliged. I couldn't turn my back on him when I saw him at a friend's house, could I?—and make myself out so much more moral than my neighbours, unless you think I might have said, 'Please, sir,' sweeping a curtsey, 'my *fairest* objects to my associating with you, so I think I'll leave the house unless you will.'

"May, have you any heart left, or has it all been frittered away in that garish London life? I could be so deeply sorry if I thought you felt it. It seems to me so dreadful. I don't say Mr. Delacourt may not have been in fault, and, perhaps, misunderstood you, but you made it hard for any man to be sure of your love. Such a small thing to ask—so reasonable, so easy to grant! I daresay he urged it too haughtily—"

"Like the Grand Turk," said May.

"But," pursued Ella, not noticing her, "an error like that might have been overlooked. In the main, he was right. Of course he did not wish you to cut Mr. Davenport and insult your friends, but to avoid him as much as possible, and not to accept an invitation to a house where you knew he was visiting."

"My dear cousin, do you know what it would be to give way like that? What would it be when you were married, and the nature of things wouldn't permit you to be quite free?"

"Nonsense, May! It was not because you chose to associate with Mr. Davenport that this marriage was broken off, but because your entire disregard of a reasonable wish made Mr. Delacourt disbelieve in your love for him. I don't altogether blame him. It may have been a mere fit of perverseness—you always were too fond of making everyone your slave. Harry was right, but I can scarcely imagine even you wrecking your life and his for a foolish piece of pride. I shouldn't talk so, May, if I thought you cared"—her

tone softened, she looked keenly at her cousin.

"Of course you don't blame him," said May, so coolly as to entirely baffle Ella. "Women always do take the man's side; he was quite as fond of his way as I of mine, and why should I yield? If it was only a bit of perverseness on my side he ought to have been less hard on me, and not let his own temper blind him. I don't care for the love that is so ready to disbelieve in love. Besides, he did not trust me—that was at the bottom of it."

"That is what you say, but I expect you are mistaken."

"Well, I ought to know him better than you."

"It comes to this, May, that you are to give the rein to your own pride and expect your lover to have none—to be as contradictory as you can, and he is to meekly submit."

May laughed.

"Oh, dear, no. I hate a man who can't master. The only thing is I don't care for him to assert mastership over me. Eugene tried it and failed, but he wouldn't give way any more than I would, and I think all the better of him for it."

"Yet a minute ago you asked why should he not yield."

"Oh you dear old consistent humdrum!" cried May. "Don't you know me better, after I've come down here running wild and tormenting uncle out of his seven senses, every single time I could manage it? Did you ever know me consistent, or practical, or anything tolerably reasonable? I'm good for nothing but talk nonsense, and sing uncle's favourite songs, and—and—be happy in my own way."

The speech, rattled off anyhow, in a way that had brought tears to Ella's eyes, was finished by the speaker flinging her arms round her cousin.

"Don't scold me any more, Ella," she said, in the sweetest, most loving way; "don't pity me because, I don't need it—only don't think me quite heartless, because—well, because I can't cry over a mistake."

What could Ella do after that but embrace and kiss and pat the winsome pleader, and wonder no more, as she had sometimes, how any man could put up with May's caprices and fancies and "queening" it.

It seemed impossible not to yield to her in everything when she was in this mood—not to love her the more for her faults, and even love the faults themselves.

She went to her room and undressed slowly, listening to May's careless voice trilling away like a happy bird.

Did she care?—did she have no soft memories if only at times? If, Ella thought, she only knew—if she could be sure that May was not acting a part!

And May's song ceased as she laid her head on the pillow and stared at the stars looking in at her window, and when they began to pale she was sleeping and clasping one hand restlessly over the other.

"Oh, my ring! my ring!" she said, aloud, and then came a long, weary sigh. "It is gone! Oh! Eugene, why did you take it away?"

So these were the two stories—the one Eugene Delacourt had told to his nurse, and May's version to which Ella had listened. And Ella waited to judge till she had heard both.

CHAPTER IV.

MADGE, shrewd and with feminine acumen in an *affaire du cœur*, was not surprised when she found her young master throwing off his solitariness.

Hitherto no arts of hers had persuaded him to accept the invitations of his neighbours, and she began to fear his late wandering life, in all manner of wild places, had thoroughly unfitted him for ordinary society. Nevertheless, the change did not quite satisfy her. She was not pleased to know that a girl whom the

looked on as utterly heartless was able to practically order Eugene's life.

"He'd better be rid of the toils at once," she would say. "But what's the use of talking? I might hold forth till I'm dumb, it would be no good. I wish he'd go to those outlandish places again, even though I'd miss him so, sooner than to fret his heart out after a girl like that. I just wish young Mr. Willoughby would fancy her. He's just come home from Paris, and I have heard he's wild about her."

Her wish, unlike many in this world, was fulfilled.

"May," said Ella one morning at the end of that week, "do you know Algy Willoughby is just home?"

"Who is that?" asked May.

"Don't you remember Algy who used to try and domineer over us, and you used to fly at him like a spitfire?"

"Yes," said the girl, beginning to laugh. "But he was a rather jolly little lad for all that. What has he grown up like?"

"Good-looking, rather tall, but much the same as he was—little change. He's been staying in Paris, and I don't think he was expected home so soon. Partly why I told you was, that his mother has been suggesting the idea of a walking party to the old camp, and of course he will be there; but I wasn't sure whether you would like to go."

"Why not?" said May, and catching sight her cousin's face the colour came into her own.

"You mean Mrs. Willoughby has asked Eugene—I mean Mr. Delacourt," said she, half angrily. "Didn't I tell you there was nothing between us? I don't care whether I meet him or not. I shall go, certainly."

"Oh, very well," said Ella, meekly, feeling rather sat upon.

The party met in Mrs. Willoughby's drawing-room on the Saturday morning, that lady herself, her daughter and son, receiving the guests.

By Nellie Willoughby stood Delacourt's tall form; and May, as she turned from greeting Nellie, gave him a passive little hand and a conventional smile.

She looked superbly handsome, and as bright as the sunshiny day. She barely suffered Delacourt to touch her fingers and to make the usual formal salutations before she had, with a manner that ignored him, turned to Algernon Willoughby, holding out both her hands—

"Why, Algy," she said, delightedly, "how glad I am to see you!"

"May," said the young man, as if he could hardly believe that this beautiful woman was the wild little girl he had tried to rob of her hardy-earned blackberries, and who had boxed his ears for his pains, "is it really you? By Jove!"

His look of frank admiration said the rest. May gave a swift glance over her shoulder. Delacourt had moved away—he was bending down to Nellie, handing her her gloves or something, and May slipped her fingers on to Algernon's offered arm.

"It's like old times," said she, softly, looking upward under those long, thick lashes just as they passed Delacourt.

What wonder that the man's heart throbbed and burned—just such a tender clinging hand on his arm, just such a glance into his face! Was it his folly or hers, his madness or hers, that had flung her out of his hold into someone else's, and closed his lips against a single remonstrance?

The day passed as such days usually do where there is sunshine and pleasant people, and beautiful scenery to explore.

There was not much of the Roman camp left—only a trace of the mound and some stones, that seemed to have fallen into a sort of natural archway.

Such as it was everyone looked at it, and tried to make out inscriptions that had never been there.

May and Algy Willoughby wandered over it,

recalling many a childish escapade—for this had been a favourite playground—and seemed to have a great many confidences.

Algy's head was very nearly turned—he was devotion itself, and could hardly tear himself from May's side, even when other claims were made on him.

Towards the afternoon, however, fortune deserted the party. Nobody had noticed a few ominous clouds, though one or two ladies had said they felt thunder in the air, and the storm burst on them unawares. It found them scattered, May and Algy away no one knew where, three or four others ditto, Mrs. Willoughby, Nellie, Ella, and Delacourt some distance from the camp near trees.

Delacourt had been lying on the grass watching the girls twist daisy chains, but as a bright flash seemed to come right across his eyes he sprang up.

"You mustn't stay here!" he exclaimed, "under these trees, Miss Stanton. Run for that deserted cottage over there—do you see it? I'll take care of Mrs. Willoughby."

"There isn't any shelter!" exclaimed Nellie, frightened; and Ella, more calm, said—

"I don't see any cottage; there isn't any."

"You don't know your own country as well as I do," said he, smiling. "Get up on to the road, avoid the trees, and you'll come to it. It is quite safe, and the door is open. Now run, both of you."

They obeyed, while he followed with Mrs. Willoughby, who was slight and active and made good way.

"I wonder where the others are," said she, anxiously. "Algy and May, they are so heedless. Nellie, do you know where they are?"

"No, mamma. At the camp, I expect."

"Are they?" said Delacourt, quickly—they were now in the little parlour of the cottage—"I'll go and see."

"Oh, no!" they all cried. "Don't go out in this storm, Mr. Delacourt. They are quite safe, and you must go through the woods."

"It's the quickest, but there is another way," he said. "The storm won't hurt me."

"It's so heavy," said Nellie, shuddering, for the lightning kept flashing blindly, and the thunder roaring overhead.

Ella said nothing, but put her hand on his arm.

He paused, looking down into her uplifted eyes—a flash, blue and vivid, struck athwart the window.

"I must go," he said, hurriedly. "I cannot rest here—you will all be quite safe."

She dropped her hand and her eyes from their steadfast gaze, gave a little smile, and the next minute he had gone.

Not by the safe road, but by the quickest, through the wood, under the trees, that might at any minute crash above him, but what did he care? In the self-absorption of love it seemed to him no one could take care of May but himself.

It seemed so in truth, for under that stone archway in the camp he found Algy and May, protected from the heavy rain, but, as he knew and they did not, in danger from the loose hold of their place of shelter.

May was pale, and looked as if she were frightened. He almost fancied there was relief in her eyes when she saw him, but if there were it passed too quickly to be sure of.

"You mustn't stay here," he said, quickly, but quietly. "The others are all sheltered in a cottage up the hill, and this isn't safe."

"Quite safe," said May, not stirring.

"It's perfectly safe," said Willoughby, a little aggressively, feeling his chivalry impugned. "You surely don't think—"

"I don't think anything, my dear fellow," said the other, with a touch of impatience. "I know, if you don't, that the hold of these stones is very slight, and they may fall any minute."

"I'm sorry you put yourself out to look after us," said May, politely. "Algy is quite capable of taking care of me, and I would rather stay here."

"We are much obliged to you all the same," said Algy, following her cue, with a triumphant look at Delacourt.

"Will you come, Miss Stanton?" said Eugene, without a glance at Algy; he might have been part of the crumbling stones for all the notice he took of him.

"You heard her answer; I will take care of her," said Algy, hotly.

Delacourt coolly made a step forward and took May's ungloved hand, drawing her, with a force as imperious as it was gentle, from beneath the arch. Her momentary struggle to free herself was impotence itself in that strong clasp; her flush of anger and indignation seemingly unheeded.

Algernon rushed forward, but at that instant there came a gleam of lightning that dazzled them. For a second they could scarcely see; and Delacourt, waiting for no more, hurried May forward, only turning a little way off to give a parting warning to Willoughby, which he could not be sure he had heard.

May was nearly breathless, less with the speed they made than with the emotions that half choked her. True, when that flash had come her fingers had closed round Delacourt's hand in her sudden bewilderment and tremor, but now the immediate danger was past and her passion had full sway.

"Mr. Delacourt," she said, again making an effort to be free, and her great eyes blazing: "what do you mean?"

"I will tell you when you are safe."

"Safe, through all those trees? That is the only way to the hill."

"Your pardon, it is not; you have forgotten the path leading to the road."

He spoke very quietly. She was excited.

"You have insulted Algy," she said. "You had no right—you forget yourself."

"I will settle the point with him afterwards," answered Delacourt; "one cannot parley at a moment of danger with a man who won't listen to reason."

"Or a woman either, I suppose," said she, sarcastically.

"Or a woman either," was the unexpected answer; "since it pleases you to apply my words in that way."

She was silent a minute from sheer indignation; then, frigidly,—

"Will you please let go my hand, Mr. Delacourt?"

"Certainly; I beg your pardon."

There was no doing anything with him; no rousing him—no moving him from his unvarying courtesy. May glanced back into the valley with a half idea to defy him and return; but it was misty with driving rain, and the lightning danced over it every minute.

She was afraid to be alone, she had always been nervous in a storm, and probably Algernon had left the camp. Here she felt safe—she knew she did, deeply as that feeling increased her ire. As she could not defy Delacourt—and knew that he knew it, for he took no notice of her lingering step—she tried to plant a sting.

"I wish I knew if Algy were safe," she said, anxiously, an anxiety not all feigned.

"When I have taken you to shelter I will go back and look after him," said Delacourt, without a change of tone or feature. But by a skilfully arranged phrase he had befooled May, by rendering Algernon ridiculous. "At present we had best quicken our pace."

She obeyed him passively, because she could not help it, but her heart and mind were in a whirl. She took no heed of the lightning and the rain. The one would have terrified her at an ordinary time, and she would have remembered she was being drenched through.

They reached the cottage where others had now gathered, and were received with acclamations of delight.

"But where is Algy?" exclaimed his mother, beginning to get frightened.

"I am going to see," Delacourt answered, moving again towards the door.

"Indeed, no, you must not," exclaimed a dozen voices, Mrs. Willoughby's among them, but May stood aloof, frightened at what she

had done, trembling at the thought of danger to Delacourt, but resolutely keeping back a word of remonstrance; she would not show him she cared what he did.

"Here is Algry," said Ella, in the midst of the confusion; and I stalked that young gentleman, and, after answering inquiries by saying he had come through the woods, went to May's side.

"Through the woods!" repeated his sister; "very foolish of you. I can't think why you didn't come with Mr. Delacourt and May."

When the storm had somewhat lessened a few of the gentlemen volunteered to go forward to the next farmhouse and see if they could secure conveyances for the ladies—Delacourt amongst them. Perhaps he preferred facing the storm again to seeing May and Algry Willoughby apparently inseparable under his very eyes. Algernon, however, also joined the foraging party, and Delacourt drew a breath of relief, notwithstanding that presently he found Algry by his side and beginning, angrily,

"Mr. Delacourt, you and I have an account to settle. Do you think it is the act of a gentleman to take a lady away from my care in that manner?"

"It is always the act of a gentleman to protect a lady," said Delacourt, smiling a little.

"She had protection."

"Allow me to contradict that. Since you chose to seek shelter in a place palpably unsafe I must decline to consider you a fit protector for the lady in question."

"I suppose," said Algry, hotly; "you understand what interpretation I must put on such conduct—such an extraordinary interest in Miss Stanton's safety."

"I have no wish to fetter liberty of thought," said the other, unmoved.

"I can assure you Miss Stanton is not at all pleased at your interference."

"Very likely. May I ask, did she send you as her ambassador?"

"No. Of course it is impossible for her to fight this battle for herself, so I fight it for her—as a gentleman should."

"I am sorry we differ as to a gentleman's duties," said Delacourt, carelessly. "I always thought one of them was that he should not make a lady's name the subject of dispute."

Willoughby, with an exclamation not unlike an oath, strode forward, and Delacourt thought no more of him. He did not see May again that night—he did not care to; and, anyhow, would have avoided her.

She would have had her triumph if she had known how sharply she had stabbed him that day—how the mere touch of her hand, in his had quickened his whole soul's recollections that were an agony. Yet, perhaps, her nobler nature might have grained, and not triumphed—she was so wayward.

Even to-night, though she knew she had, at the least, pained him—the very thing she had meant to do—she tossed miserably from side to side, and could not rest.

Deep down in her heart the knowledge lay, doing fierce battles with her anger against him, that he had not forgotten—that in danger she had been his first thought—and yet she repeated again and again that he had presumed too far, and she would never forgive it.

(To be concluded in our next.)

A dinner of wits is proverbially a palace of affections; and the envy and hatred which all literary men really feel for each other, especially when they are exchanging dedications of mutual affection, always insure in such assemblies the agreeable presence of a general feeling of painful constraint. If a good thing occurs to a guest he will not express it, lest his neighbour, who is publishing a novel in numbers, shall appropriate it next month, or he himself, who has the same responsibility of production, be deprived of its legitimate appearance.

CINDERELLA.

—o—

CHAPTER XL.—(continued).

The beginning of the note had evidently been torn off, and perhaps washed away, and the writing commenced somewhat abruptly,—

"It is folly, I know, for no eye will ever see this; still it is a relief to write—nearly as great a relief as to speak—and if I did not, I should go mad, mad, mad! Oh! my hard, worthy, commonplace English husband! If you could hear me! Oh! my hard, critical, inquisitive, detesting step-daughters! If you could but know my past!

"But rest easy; you never shall! I am writing now for two reasons—one as a kind of mental escape-pipe, a safety-valve; the other reason is, to put down things that I may never forget them—no, not the smallest item.

"At present every detail is branded on my brain in fire, but time softens the past, heals scars, pleads for forgiveness, blurs over terrible wrongs—it shall never efface mine as long as I live and as long as this paper exists. Let me commence at the beginning. What do I remember first? A palace in St. Petersburg, with a big white portico and shallow steps, droskys with their horses, sleighs and bells and monjiks drivers, torchlight, swift sleighing on the Neva, a housefull of servants, an English nurse, a French 'bonne,' money and friends in abundance, but no mother. There were Sergius, my brother Nathalie, and me, and our Aunt Sophie, who kept us all in order, including my father.

"After this a long time, we seemed to become very quiet. There was a sort of mystery always around us, like a fog, and queer, strange people to be met on the stairs at night.

Then we were sent to the summer palace, near Moscow, and we stayed away for four years, father coming to see us now and then, and bringing his strange friends.

"Sergius was now nineteen, an officer in the Imperial Foot Guards. I was seventeen, and grown up; and Nathalie was a year younger. She was very pretty, far prettier than I was—her features were so delicate, her eyes so brilliant.

"She was a creature full of fire and energy and impulse. I had a lover, a brother officer of Sergius, but older. His father had a summer palace with five verats of ours, and Alexander and I had known one another as children.

"How can I tell how it happened? But we loved each other very, very much. How adorable he looked in his full-dress uniform, with white braided coat and fcras!

"I close my eyes—I see him now! Alas! in life I shall never see him more. How could I tell my husband, that good, honest man, who knows not emotion or sentiment, that my heart is buried in Alex De Bodisco's grave?

"Alex had a brother, Ivan, as different to him as night from the sun—dark and stealthy in his disposition; avacious, cruel, grasping, full of envy, full of deceit, fair, and sly—small, and insignificant. To Nathalie I always called him the 'white adder' but Nathalie liked him a little—deluded girl!—and, will it be conceived, he actually made proposals to me also, well knowing that I was his brother's promised bride.

"Alex was the eldest son. Ivan hated him bitterly for that cause, and on account of me. Alas! what is more potent than envy?

"I was said to be my aunt's heiress—my rich Aunt Sophie. I was to make a good match—a duke, a prince, they all declared.

"But Alex was good enough for me. His father was only a count, but he was a great person at Court, a favourite with the Emperor, and the head of the secret police—a post of honour in St. Petersburg, and a post of danger too.

"Alex told me that there were grave mat-

ters in hand—that the Empire was honey-combed by a secret society that threatened its very existence, and that was closing round the Upper Ten as the folds of a boa gradually closes in suffocating its victim.

"But I was young, I was giddy, I was seventeen. I put these things far from me. I rode and drove and sang and amused myself. It was but the calm that comes before the storm.

"These halcyon days were short-lived! Gradually, very gradually, the truth was allowed to dawn on me.

"My father, Sergius, and Aunt Sophie were secret, but ever busy conspirators. Ivan de Bodisco was the very mind and centre of their plots; and Nathalie, my younger sister, was given over to their schemes body and soul! One shock came to me after another, and I was prepared for the worst.

"I was a tacit member myself. Was I not aware of the nearest councils, the stealthy comings and goings?

"Who knows but I might have been active in the cause, too, but for Alex?

"Little did he dream of what I knew when he poured out his confidences into my ears, and his bitter condemnation of well-born gentlemen who were ready to plunge the country into civil war, to pit class against class, brother against brother; who did not stop at dark and secret means to carry out terrible deeds, and who shunned the daylight like so many owls. Latterly my father had looked but coldly on my intimacy with Alex, although in former years I had known my father to say he 'loved him as a son; that he was all that we could wish to see—a chivalrous gentleman.' Now his opinion was changed, as well as his politics—now Ivan was his favourite, and Alex was given the cold shoulder, and a still cooler welcome.

"Sergius was short in his manner, my father, tall, Nathalie snappish, Aunt Sophie intolerable, but I did my best to make up to him for all slights; and, indeed, he often and often said, only he loved me so dearly, he never could have borne such undeserved treatment, and such a frosty reception from his oldest friends. Poor Alex never dreamt of the true reason, and I dared not tell him.

"My relatives were, in their own opinion, the representatives of retributive justice. They were to subvert all present institutions, and leave not (figuratively speaking) one stone on another. Alex, on the contrary, was a sworn defender of the throne, loyal to the very marrow of his bones, and beyond the most inspired persuasion, or the most fabulous bribe.

"Give him up—give him up!" was the family chorus, "it is dangerous to us to have him about here. He is not, and never can be one of us. Send him away."

"At this time we lived, as it were, on the edge of a volcano. My father and Aunt Sophie were displeased and disappointed with me, but I held to my own way, I would not resign my lover. Nathalie, too, befriended me. She sympathised with my love affair; she liked Alex, although he was a tyrant, and although my interest in the 'cause' was nil.

"We came to St. Petersburg once more for the winter season. We were very gay. Our drawing-rooms were thrown open, the dinner parties and balls the most brilliant of the season. Nathalie and I were presented at court, but I knew that it was all a blind, that underneath this constant whirl a darker undercurrent was steadily carrying all before it. I had a presentiment that something dreadful was going to happen. It was coming nearer and nearer, and I had felt it especially one evening, even when I was dancing—the Dance de la Cour—in the Imperial White Palace, surrounded by lights, and jewels, and smiling faces. And, therefore, when Nathalie, in the early hours of that dark morning, rushed into my room in her dressing gown, I was prepared for anything.

"Pauline," she cried, "there's a frightful work downstairs—murder—all is discovered—

I believe the police are on our track. Come down, throw on something, and let us listen. They are all in the cedar room—Sergius, my father, Alex, and another officer.'

"I lost no time in putting my feet into slippers, and wrapping myself in a long fur mantle that reached to the ground, and following my sister with palpitating heart. We made our way into a cupboard at the back of the cedar room, and looked nervously through a stained-glass window. It was red, it made everything look as if it were steeped in blood. Unhappy augury! The cupboard was in an outer passage, and sunkin in the thick wall, but it had no door into the cedar room, only a sham-coloured glass window, to which our eye-balls were now pressed as if they were about to burst from our heads.

"We could scarcely hear a syllable, as the door was not a door, but a wall; but we made out, from stray words and gestures, that Alex, who was present, had discovered that the greater part of the treason plotted was under our roof—that by some means, some hint dropped by his father, he had come to warn us in time. Infatuated Alex! He mentioned a list of names in his own possession, and looked at his brother Ivan sternly—Ivan, who merely said something and laughed.

There were present Sergius, Ivan de Bodisco, and another officer—a friend of Alex—my father and two well-known noblemen had just left the room. Among these hot-headed young men arose high words—very high words—pistols were promptly produced, the room cleared. Oh! how our hearts beat! Who were going to fight?—Sergius and the young Cossack-officer. How fierce they looked—how determined! Now the distance was passed—could we not stop it in time? I beat my hands frantically upon the window, and screamed, 'Sergius!—Sergius!' but I was not heard—I was too late. I saw, through that awful red window, this—my brother erect against the stove at the end of the room, facing me—Ivan with his back to the door—the others I could not see—then a sharp report—a scream—Sergius had fallen. He drew up both arms, and fell forward on his face, stone dead—a victim to the Hand of Justice—only nineteen years of age. So young, so full of life, so brave and enthusiastic, and, alas! so mistaken.

"But the other man was also dead, or dying. I saw Alex lift his body, and carry it over and lay it upon a sofa within sight. As he did so he raised his head, and looked towards his brother, Ivan, who still stood with a pistol in his hand, and his back to the door. He raised this pistol, and aimed and fired deliberately, and shot Alex through the brain. Yes, with his own hand he killed his brother. I will always maintain it, though, save the eyes to whom nothing is hidden, none saw the awful act save mine. Nathalie had fainted in a heap at my feet the instant she saw Sergius fall, and nothing remained in the room, with the murderer but three corpses—and 'dead men tell no tales.'

"I saw no more. I awoke raving on my bed, with Nathalie bending over me, the door locked, no one admitted but Aunt Sophie and herself. I believe I was delirious for days, and, when I came to myself I was the ghost of what I had been—I looked fifty instead of eighteen.

"But, weak as I was, I lost no time in violently denouncing Ivan de Bodisco to my broken-hearted father—to my aunt—to anyone who would listen to me. Alas! he had told his story first, and made it good. No one believed me; my brain was turned; they said, and it was Sergius, they declared, who shot Alex first, and then his friend, in a duel. Of this fact Ivan took his solemn oath upon the Greek Bible. What proof had I? How could I see through that dark closet? Nathalie was there, she believed in Ivan's innocence—I was mistaken—I was mad!

"Sergius, Alex, and Paul, the Cossack officers were buried at night, where I know not; but as they fell they lie, somewhere to-

gether, until that great day when the graves shall be opened, and no secrets shall be hid.

"Alex's father and friends were frantic at their loss, and left no stone unturned to find him, but suspicion never looked our way. Had we not a son missing also—Sergius?

"Time healeth all things, but it never healed my heart. Nathalie was my only consolation, and even here what a gulf there was between us! She was devoted to the Hand of Justice—devoted heart and soul, whilst I loathed its very name, and made no secret of the fact? Had it not cost me a lover and a brother?

"Suspicion had blown over, the conspirators were easy in their minds once more. We had done with mourning, we were very gay outwardly. How could I be gay ever again as long as I lived? The sight I saw through that crimsoned-pained window had killed every cheerful feeling in my disposition, as if it were a plant seared by one night's dreadful blight. I did not know how to laugh now. My aunt was anxious I should marry—indeed, I was not much comfort in the family, it were well I was settled; I would have a fine fortune and my mother's diamonds. Aunt Sophie had given her interest to a most eligible suitor, Prince Kouraki, and urged me to accept him with entreaties, bribes, threats and tears. But I was obdurate—I would never marry. Ivan de Bodisco, too, secretly persecuted me with his hateful addresses, despite my unveiled, shrinking abhorrence of him. He would not listen to no.

"'What can you want with me but my money?' I asked him, fiercely. 'And you are rich now, you have your brother's fortune. You did not forget that you were his heir when you raised your hand, as you stood at the door, and took steady aim. He was looking at you, too; his eyes met yours. Do they not haunt you? Do you not see them when you shut your own—and in the dark?'

"For once Ivan was moved. He became ghastly and guiltily white; his lips trembled, beads of perspiration stood out upon his brow. I saw that he feared me, and I went on—

"'I may not live to do it, Ivan de Bodisco, but your brother Alex shall be avenged. Nemesis is slow, but she is sure. Do not doubt but that she will overtake you yet. And there will be no mercy for you—you second Cain!'

"After this I had no more of his attentions, but he took another form of persecuting me. He completely poisoned my aunt's mind against me and my father's. They believed that I was an informer, a traitress; that I only waited for an opportunity to sell their lives, and avenge the death of Alex.

"My life now was too unbearable, I could not endure it. I made up my mind to run away. I took Nathalie into my confidence only. I packed my diamonds, some money, a small supply of clothes and actually started off to Paris, where, by means of a letter of introduction I had procured, and under my mother's maiden name, 'Warren,' I got a place as companion to an old lady. Ugh! how I hated it! I, Pauline, Countess Domonoff, driving in her stately carriage, combing her peacocky poodle, mixing her medicine, reading, writing, carrying cushions and hot jars, and being alternately petted and scolded. I did not like it, but it was better than De Bodisco's neighbourhood.

"How often I wished he was dead, or that I was dead. Life was very monotonous and dreary.

"I wished I lay in an unknown grave beside poor Sergius and Alex. I wished for rest and peace. And they came in my way very strangely and unexpectedly.

"An English gentleman, elderly, rich, kind, old enough to be my father, saw me at Madame Rivers's, and positively fell in love with me and asked me to marry him, and I did. After some hesitation, I married him one morning very quietly at the British Embassy.

"Who would believe it? I am no longer

Miss Warren, but Mrs. Rivers. I have a big house, a fine carriage—which I hate—a maid, three powdered footmen, and about two grown-up step-daughters.

"They do not like me; but I shall do them no harm; all I ask for is peace. I want no baubles, no admiration, no diamonds—and they are so jealous of their poor little family gewgaws."

"Nathalie has not written to me for a year. They whispered that she was dead. No, I should feel it, I'm sure, if she was. They said my father had got into trouble at last, poor, infatuated father.

"I believe that man will betray you yet—that man you believe in as you do in our Greek Patriarch himself.

"You and my aunts were very furiously angry. She will never forgive me, not alone for running away, for hating the great cause, but on account of her *protégé*, Prince Kouraki. I might have been Princess Kouraki, lady of honour to the Empress, and I am only plain Mrs. Rivers, wife of an English squire. Perhaps—nay, surely—it is best so; only I hope I shall not be discovered.

"At that ball at Frogborough Town Hall I saw Lord Halsbury whispering and looking at me very hard. He has danced with me on the banks of the Neva, but he does not know it; he would never expect to see the Countess Pauline among these respectable British matrons, who talk of the weather and their servants and their stupid little scandals till I am often inclined to yawn in their faces.

"Am I growing ill-natured and soured and uncharitable? Ah! well, it does not matter! Something tells me I shall not live to be very old.

"I dreamt of a wedding last night—"

* * * * *

Here the paper came to an end as abruptly as it had commenced—some of it had been torn away—there was no more.

Pauline's hands had trembled so much latterly she had not been able to hold it, but had placed it before her on the little table, leaning her elbows firmly down, and resting her head upon her hands, had perused it in that fashion.

When it was all finished she fell back in her chair, and looked as if she were going to faint, but she did not.

She sat very still for some moments, and then, gathering up the sheets very carefully, she went into the house, and despatched a telegram to Oscar Loraine, Blue Club, Pall Mall:

"I wish to see you at once—to-day, if possible."

CHAPTER LXII. AND LAST.

Lady Curzon, in her eager haste, forgot that Mr. Loraine could not have yet reached London; indeed on second thoughts, a man on horseback, if he galloped all the way, might intercept him at the railway station; and a light-weight groom on a very smart black was just in the nick of time to see the train going out of the station.

The telegram was sent, and Mr. Loraine arrived at the Manor for the second time that day, just after dinner, and was shown into the drawing-room, where, of course, he found Lady Curzon alone.

She had been in a state of feverish excitement all the afternoon; she had not touched afternoon tea, nor tasted a morsel of dinner, to the disgust of Letty, who had an excellent appetite, with which nothing ever interfered.

As she looked at her friend's pale face, and at the anxious, restless expression of her eyes, she asked herself, in some alarm, "Could she be going off her head again?" But, no; she was soon reassured by Pauline's saying,—

"I'm sure you think I am very odd, Letty, and I'm sure I look odd, and I cannot eat, and I cannot rest. One thing I must tell you, I'm not going to marry Count de

Bodisco; I would sooner die," speaking between her set teeth.

"Oh! Pauline, how glad I am!" exclaimed the other, coming round the table with a rush, and embracing her with an ecstatic hug. "I knew you could not bear him. I could not bear him. This match made me wretched; but you have been so reserved I did not like to speak. Have you quarrelled? When did you break it off, or was it?"—hesitating, and looking hard at her companion—"on account of Mr. Loraine?"

Pauline did not answer this treble-barrelled question; her expectant ears had caught a ring.

"Is it the Count?" demanded Letty, rather nervously.

"No, Letty; it is not. I hope he will never ring at this door again," said the other, rising from her unctuous meal. "He is a very bad man—an infamous man. You shall hear all; another time I will explain everything that I can explain."

"Mr. Loraine, my lady, in the drawing-room," said a footman, flinging the door open, and feeling that something or other uncommon was "up" this particular evening.

Of course, he had no prospect of gratifying his curiosity; neither had Mrs. Denham, who sat at the end of the table, looking blankly after her friend, her curiosity justly whetted, and yearning for particulars.

Mr. Loraine was standing by the fire when Pauline entered.

"It was very good of you to come so soon," she said, approaching the mantelpiece, and laying her hand on it to steady herself, "I have read it all."

"So I conclude. And what is the result? Have you dared to change your mind?" he asked, impressively.

"I have," she answered. "I would rather suffer any fate than marry De Bodisco!"

"How did you ever listen to him?" he asked, in a voice of peremptory entreaty—"he is old enough to be your father."

"Oh, don't; you need not repeat all that!" she exclaimed, with a gesture of passionate protest. "I will refuse to marry him now or ever, and I believe sincerely that this refusal will cost me my life," she added, with the composure of utter despair.

"Pauline, you are mad to talk like this," said her companion, impatiently. "Leave me to deal with him. I do not ask you to marry me, but I would rather see you in your grave than that man's wife. By any means I must compass your escape. Give me the key to the secret that locks your lips; it is the only chance, and let me act for you as your friend—your brother."

"Oscar"—she paused, and then went on firmly—"I will tell you the secret, but were it known to other ears that I had divulged it I am a dead woman!"

"Nonsense, Pauline; you are too fanciful! There are no such secrets now-a-days in this nineteenth century; and even if it were as you say, you know that anything you tell me is as safe as if it had never passed your own bosom. What is this heavy secret?" with an incredulous smile.

Pauline looked timidly round the room ere she replied, as if she actually believed the old adage that walls had ears, and then facing her companion, who was leaning his elbow carelessly on the chimney-piece, statue-like, with hands tightly clenched and bloodless lips, she said,—

"Prepare yourself for a great shock—a great surprise."

"Nothing that you could tell me would astonish me," he said. "After last Tuesday in Piccadilly there are no surprises left for me," he replied, emphatically.

"You have heard of the Society of the Hand of Justice?" she said, in a chill, strange voice.

"I have. Is it not the curse of Europe? But how came you to even know of its existence?"

"I—I—I have been a sworn member for nine years."

Crash went a Sèvres vase down on the fender, the result of a sudden jerk from Mr. Loraine's elbow.

There were, then, still surprises in store for him, after all.

He merely stood and looked at her in silence. He could not speak, neither could she, for one or two moments, and the strain became unendurable.

His accusing eyes were maddening, and at last she spoke.

"Nay, you need not shrink from me with horror," she said, in a voice of bitter disdain. "I was no more to blame than my mother. I was not a free agent."

And hereupon, with hasty, almost incoherent speech, she related to her astonished listener the tale of the Dwarf that haunted Miss Jones's select seminary, of her own unlucky discovery of a party of conspirators hatching their plots in the very midst of that maiden lady's innocent and unsuspecting establishment.

"It was like hatching a wasp's nest inside the statue of a saint," he exclaimed; "but I can well believe it. It was just like them. They are as cunning as foxes, and as unscrupulous as—"

"Let me go on," she said, putting up her hand imperatively, "and tell it all now."

And hereupon she related her meeting with the Count, her grand-aunt's legacy, her last charge regarding her Aunt Nathalie, and her own vow.

From this she hurriedly sketched her life in Paris—her political friends and Bodisco, her manager and pursebearer.

She then swiftly brought the narrative down to the present year, related the hold the Count had over her, the bribe for which she had sold herself and her happiness, her aunt's liberty, and then she paused at last abruptly and almost breathless.

"I am glad you have trusted me at last, Pauline. I will rid you of this monster, and if possible I will restore your aunt to liberty. You forget that I have some interest, that I am in the diplomatic service, that I have powerful friends at St. Petersburg. Be assured I shall strain every nerve on behalf of Nathalie Domanoff. The first thing to be done is to postpone your marriage."

"How? I cannot, will not see him. I could not trust myself," she answered, tremulously.

"No need to see him; sit down and write," pointing to a distant table. "I will post your letter. Say—what are you to say? Oh, that you have serious affairs to arrange, that your wedding must be postponed, and that you must beg him not to call here for the next three weeks."

"But he will," she exclaimed, hysterically. "He will be here by the next train."

"And if he is," returned Mr. Loraine, resolutely, "your servants can easily say 'not at home.' I myself will start for Russia tomorrow morning. I shall reach the capital, by rapid travelling, in five days. I will leave no stone unturned to release your aunt—nay, if possible, I will bring her back with me. Twenty years is a long sentence. The laws have relaxed of late. I have every confidence of success if—" He paused; he did not give utterance to his thought. "And, now, Pauline, that I share your secret—all your secrets, I hope you feel the load of your responsibilities lightened."

"I don't know. I am so unlucky always, only getting out of one trouble to fall into another, that I sometimes think, Oscar, that it would have been better for me and all my friends if I had never regained my senses, and remained always in that place!"

"Nonsense," he returned, scornfully; "your evil days are over; you have had rough, dark weather for many years; your star was not in the ascendant, but, believe me, Pauline, that after such storms there will be sunshine and peace; and now you may trust your affairs to

me with the utmost confidence, and," quickly looking at his watch, "I must go, or I shall lose the last train. I hope by this day three weeks, at the very latest, to be here again. Good-bye."

Their hands clasped; there was no uncertainty in the eyes that met each other; they had no secrets between them; there was nothing to keep them apart now.

The three weeks had crawled by, and behold Pauline, whose impatience had known no limits, waiting alone in her victoria at the station for Oscar Loraine.

She was regardless of appearances, she was reckless of Mrs. Grundy. She was counting the very seconds till the train came round the curve.

At last it was in sight—at last Oscar sprang out—out alone. Her heart sank. He said nothing beyond "How do you do, Pauline?" till he was already seated beside her, and the brown cobs were briskly trotting homewards in the anticipation of their eveninging corn.

"You see, Pauline, that I am alive," he said, very quietly. "I know, my dear, that you will be terribly disappointed, but it could not be helped. I was too late!" taking her hand under cover of the rug. "Just four years too late. She had been set free by a higher power than the Czar. Her release came from him too late."

Pauline's tears were dropping fast.

"Oh! I had so built on seeing her—on making up to her for all those dreadful years. My mother's sister, I—I have thought so much—so much of her, and she never even heard of me! Oh! it is a cruel, cruel disappointment!"

"To you, my poor Pauline, no doubt; but she is far happier than you could hope to make her. A pure Russian, as you are a pure Englishwoman, speaking now no language but her own—French and English long forgotten—worn down and enfeebled by years of toil and hardship, what would she have done in your life? I made inquiries. She was well-known in Irkusth. She kept a small shop, and was noted for her charity, endurance, and faith. She never murmured at her hard lot. It had been, she declared, of her own choosing, and she never opened her lips on the subject of the past. No one knew of her former name or rank, save the authorities and the priest. She went by the name of 'white-haired Catherine,' and passed as what she proclaimed herself to be, 'a woman of the people.' No one guessed that she was that indomitable little conspirator, the Countess Nathalie Domanoff. I procured for you her Prayer-book reliquary, and a few simple, common articles that belonged to her. They are to follow me here. And now, Pauline, you see Bodisco in a still more glaring light. I have proof that he played two parts—as conspirator and a spy. He was well aware of Nathalie's fate; would have informed you of it ere you had left the church, no doubt, and laughed in your face."

* * * * *

The next day Count Bodisco himself appeared upon the scene and was admitted.

The interview was short and conclusive. Proofs of Nathalie's death were forthcoming—proofs that he was completely set aside were not wanting.

He was like some wild animal who finds at the last moment its prey snatched from its grasp.

He threw off his Russian veneer and displayed the traditional Tartar.

He threatened, he cursed, he even stamped in his impotent rage—for he was a man of immense capacity for spending money. His coffers were low.

He had reckoned on Pauline's troubles without the smallest uncertainty.

And he beheld them figuratively melting into thin air before his very eyes. Oh, that he had that Loraine—alone, and by the throat! Oh, that he had Pauline once more under his heel!

" You have told him the secret," he screamed, at last; " you know your punishment, miserable woman—sooner or later our arm will find you, and it brings death ! "

" What society and which society are you talking of, you Government spy ? I know you well ; your confederates have found you out, the Government now know you. Try and show your face beyond the Russian frontier—I cannot wish you anything worse," said Loraine, contemptuously.

" And as to secrets," put in Pauline, " I possess one of yours—the same that blighted my mother's life—the secret about your brother."

What ailed the Count now ? He became white as death, he looked positively appalled. His jaw dropped, his eyes were strained on something above Pauline's head—what, they never knew ; for, as if purposed by the whole contents of the lower regions let loose, he rushed to the door, out into the hall, clattered down the steps, and drove off in his waiting hansom, bidding the man to " Gallop—gallop," as if he were flying for his life.

Such was Ivan de Bodisco's exit. He was never seen again. There were rumours that he had his head swept off in a boiler explosion—that he had been identified and buried, but whether this was true or not was never precisely known. Perhaps he and Count Villiani—fitting companions—have gone into partnership. But stay, the Count is dead—really dead at last. He kept a grog-shop for some time in California, and drank half his own stock-in-trade, was knocked upon the head in some rowdy fight, and so perished.

Mattie and her sister live in genteel retirement in a fashionable seaside resort, occasionally attend bands on the Parade, and talk of "other days." Their sister makes them a handsome yearly allowance, but will never consent to see them.

Sophie, the maid, is now nurse to the eldest little Loraine.

Mrs. Bint has retired from the Asylum, and become housekeeper to her late lunatic servant.

Letty spends a goodly portion of time with her old friend, and talks suspiciously, often, of a certain unmarried rector—and it would not surprise us to hear that she followed her friend's example, and became a bride for a second time.

As for Pauline, the real summer of her life has come at last. She finds Oscar Loraine the realization of her earlier dreams. They are as happy as the day is long, and she has nearly forgotten her old name of "Cinderella."

[THE END.]

A TOUCHING INCIDENT.—A lady with a fondness for birds noticed that year by year a little sparrow with a deformed foot would return to her window each summer and tap on her pane. She always fed her little visitor, finally falling into the habit of making him a special cake. The ninth summer he came as usual, but one day he tapped on the window, and alighting in her hand, showed plainly that he was ill. She took him out into the air, but he would not fly, and while she still held him he died.

It is to be regretted that so wide a difference exists between the employments of early years and those of manhood and womanhood. That fifteen or twenty years of life should be spent in learning without doing, and the rest of it in doing without learning, cannot be a wise arrangement. The break is too sudden. The youth, on leaving school or college, is at once plunged into a new world, requiring qualities and abilities that have never hitherto been called forth ; and he finds it hard, if not impossible, to make his mental possessions available for practical use. If young people were accustomed to do more, and older ones to learn more, life would be happier and more successful. In fact, these two should never be separated, but act and react with each other all through life.

JENNY.

WHEN John Claghorn and Annie Sylvester were married the hundred and one friends who attended the magnificent wedding, and showered upon the young couple their congratulations and their presents, did so in just appreciation of their fitness each for the other.

That they were suited in every way to be life-companions there could be no doubt.

Both were rich, and neither had eccentric tastes that would clash with the matter-of-fact, conventional habits of the other.

They had never distinguished themselves in any way worthy of mention, and were, on the whole, two average people, well educated, and with a sufficient stock of ordinary accomplishments to enable them to comport themselves with credit in any society.

No one who was present at the wedding ever dreamed that the young couple would, in forty-eight hours after the ceremony was performed, be on the point of separation.

After the wedding-breakfast they proceeded to Guildford, and were comfortably domiciled in the groom's snug cottage.

They were too well-bred to show their affection, each for the other, in public ; but when alone their near and tender relation was the inspiration for endearing caresses, that would not interest the reader if described, and the bestowal of loving epithets that would be the veriest nonsense in print.

Dinner was served at six o'clock, and when the groom entered the library, while his wife retired to dress for the meal, a servant handed him a letter, which had been forwarded from his town address.

" From Gerald ! " he cried, breaking the seal ; and stepping to the window, where the light was better, he read as follows :

Scarborough, June 5.

" DEAR OLD JOHN,—The invitation cards reached me by this morning's post. I was not surprised, for I was confident you would like each other, and the outcome would be a wedding. My business is such that I shall have to forego the pleasure of attending the nuptial festivities, but my congratulations are yours and hers. My offering I sent by express. Long life and happiness to Mr. and Mrs. Claghorn !—Jubilantly yours,

" GERALD AINSWORTH."

" P.S.—I saw Miss Montgomery yesterday. You know her father is interested in some big contract, and he is here, attending to his interests. Edna and her two sisters accompany him. She hopes to meet you and Mrs. Claghorn in town next season. While visiting her I talked a few minutes to Jenny. She is certainly benefited by the long trip, but she misses you sadly, and Edna says that for days after the parting her grief was violent, and she did nothing but cry. ' Dear John ! why did you leave me ? ' There is no doubt that a sight of your dear old face would brighten her up wonderfully, and I hope for her sake that Mrs. Claghorn will so overcome her dislike as to receive him. " G. A."

He had barely finished reading this letter, when the door opened and his wife entered.

He crushed the missive in his hand, and thrust it into an inner pocket with a guilty start.

Dinner was announced, and they were soon seated *tblé-dtblé*.

It was John Claghorn's intention to read the letter and make explanations to his wife during the meal, but a trifling circumstance occurred to prevent it.

They were chatting in that tender, confidential way which young couples so much indulge in during the honeymoon, when Mrs. Claghorn, as though suddenly recollecting something, turned to the waiter and said,—

" Any letters, James ? "

" Only one, madam—for Mr. Claghorn."

" Confound the fellow's stupidity ! " growled John, inwardly.

" And then, as his wife glanced at him inquiringly, he said, aloud,—

" It is from Gerald Ainsworth. You know he is at Scarborough, and could not be present at the wedding. He sends his congratulations, and has forwarded his present, which I fancy will be something unique, by express."

" May I read his letter ? "

" Presently. I'll read it to you," was the answer.

But he abruptly changed the subject, and not referring to the letter again, she had forgotten it when they arose from the table.

A friend of theirs rode up, and Mrs. Claghorn ran out to greet her.

John retired to his dressing-room to change his coat ; but somehow, when he shifted the contents of his pockets, Gerald Ainsworth's letter fluttered to the floor, and escaped his observation.

There was a concert that night, and they were to be present.

While dressing, Mrs. Claghorn had occasion to enter her husband's room, and spying the letter, picked it up.

" Gerald's letter," she said, glancing at the postmark. " I like him because he is so fond of John. I wonder what sort of people those Montgomerys are ? John often speaks of them, and Gerald is engaged to the oldest daughter, Edna. I hope she's a good woman, for he deserves the best of wives."

She indulged in this little soliloquy, holding the letter in her hand.

" I wonder what he says ? " she ventured at last. " There is certainly no harm in my reading the letter, for John said I should."

Thus fortifying herself, she drew out the notesheet and read.

As her eyes followed the lines of the postscript her face grew pale, and her lip trembled.

" Merciful Heaven ! " she managed to gasp at last.

And she repeated over the mysterious postscript aloud.

Then tears of grief, shame and jealous rage gushed from her eyes, and she stamped her feet until the mantel ornaments rattled.

" How could he deceive me so cruelly ? " she cried. " Oh, John, I loved and trusted you, but I little dreamed you were such a heartless, unprincipled scoundrel ! Oh, oh, oh ! "

And she wrung her hands, and would have torn her hair, had not her husband suddenly entered the room.

She concealed the letter, and faced him.

" What's the matter, dear ? " he demanded, halting on the threshold.

" Oh, you villain ! " she hissed.

" Annie—Mrs. Claghorn ! " he gasped, and took a step towards her.

" Don't touch me ! " she cried, starting back with a gesture of scorn. " I thought you an honest man when I married you. A thousand times you have protested to me that I was the only woman you ever loved. But you lied to me ; and now, when I have proof of your base perfidy, I despise and scorn you ! "

" Why, gracious me ! What have I done ? " he cried, much astonished. " Base perfidy ! Lies ! What do you mean ? "

" Ask yourself, Mr. Claghorn," she retorted, with cutting irony. " I am glad I learned the truth in time. Henceforth, sir, we are two ! I shall telegraph to mamma instantly, and you will be at liberty to return to your first love ! "

She swept from the room, although he sprang forward to detain her.

He could not imagine the cause of her changed demeanour, but the ridiculousness of her tragic utterances amused him, and he could not repress a smile.

" I wonder what can be the matter ? " he mused. " The woman is crazy, or has listened and believed the stories of some false friend. I'll demand an instant explanation."

He was thoroughly in earnest now, and proceeded to the door of her boudoir.

It was locked, and he could hear stifled sobbing inside.

"Aunty!" he said, knocking on the panel. No answer; but the sobbing ceased, and all was quiet.

"Little wife!" he continued.

Still silence.

"Mrs. Claghorn!"

This in a stern, determined tone.

"Sir!" was the defiant response.

"Open the door!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind."

"I will break it down!"

"If you dare to, sir, I will scream for assistance, and denounce you to the world!"

"Don't be a fool, Annie, and explain this masquerading. What is the matter? What have I done? I demand to know, that I may justify myself."

"Your tone of injured innocence does not deceive me, sir, for I have the proof of your infamy."

"Proof?" he repeated. "I fail to understand you."

"Indeed! Perhaps you will when I remind you that a letter which you carelessly dropped, and which I read—for you promised me I should do—opened my eyes to your true character."

"A letter—of mine?" cried the husband.

And he pulled out the contents of his pocket and ran over the papers which it contained.

Gerald's letter was missing.

"It was Gerald Ainsworth's letter," he said. "It contained no secret. There is not a line in it that I cannot explain."

"How about Jenny?" she retorted, "who misses you sadly, and who would brighten up wonderfully at sight of your dear old face? inconsolable maiden! It's a great pity that her 'dear John' even left her to deceive me and wreck my life!"

At this John Claghorn laughed loud and long, and so boisterous was his mirth that his wife, irritated beyond endurance, threw open the door and confronted him.

An angry retort was trembling on her lips, but he caught her in his arms, and, despite her struggles, kissed her repeatedly.

"You dear, foolish, little wife!" he cried. "You have no cause to be jealous of Jenny, and I know the poor bird misses me sadly, for she is very much attached to me."

"The poor bird!" repeated Mr. Claghorn.

"Yes. Jenny is a very intelligent Brazilian parrot. When I first formed your acquaintance, if you recollect, we went to the Zoo. You spoke so contemptuously of the parrots and macaws, and vowed so vehemently that you could never bear to have one about you, that I was afraid to mention poor Jenny, and you never formed her acquaintance. I was much attached to her, but your good will was my paramount thought. I hated to sell her, and therefore gave her to Miss Edna Montgomery, who is fond of feathered pets. I was so concerned about the matter that I hated to read Gerald's letter to you, and therefore put you off with an excuse."

"Forgive me, John!" she managed to articulate through her sobs.

And when he kissed away the tears, she said—

"You must send for Jenny at once. I shall never feel that I have made sufficient atonement until she is again in your possession. And, dear heart, I never again will be jealous!"

M. C. D.

TEACH self denial and make its practice pleasurable, and you create for the world a destiny more sublime than ever issued from the brain of the wildest dreamer.

An inventor has evolved a new trap, in one end of which is a mirror. "This may be for the female rats," says an editor, noted for his convivial habits; "but when a male rat notices that the bait looks double, he will think he has had enough and go home."

FACEPLATE.

A MOUNTAIN gorge—a picnic in the Mendips. Out of proportion—two spoons to one plate of ice-cream.

Turpines fed to sheep are said to make mutton tender. Will cabbage fed to lawyers make legal tender?

FIRE is said to be a good servant. So is gas, and yet we turn it off every night.

NEW SERVANT—"Oh, if you haven't any children or animals I can't come, because whenever anything is broken there will be no one to blame it on but me."

STARCH is said to be explosive. It causes explosions in the family when the old man finds it has been left out of his collars.

"John, what is the best thing for parrots?" asked an elderly lady of her bachelor brother, who hated parrots. "Arsenic," gruffly answered John.

As a worker, said a paper, a woman is apt to undertake too much. This is especially true when she keeps a boarding-house and tries to make a sixpenny bone-marrow soup for twenty boarders.

"Sam, you are not honest. Why do you put all the good peaches on the top of the measure, and the little ones below?" "Same reason, dat makes the front ob your house all marble, and de back gate chiefly slop-bar', sah."

"Ain't you almost boiled?" inquired a little girl of a gentleman, calling on her father and mother. "No, little one, I can't say that I am, but why do you ask, Daisy?" "Oh, because I heard mamma say that your wife kept you in hot water all the time."

In one of the new girls' schools (the inspector arrives to make an examination):—"I wish to have the best informed young lady come to the blackboard," he says, solemnly. No one moves. "Then," says he, gracefully, "I should like the prettiest one to come." They all stand up.

"CHARLIE," said mamma, "you have been a very naughty boy; you have been playing marbles, and you know I told you that you mustn't, for it is gambling, and gambling is very wicked. Now I hope you will never gamble again." Charlie promised he wouldn't, and his mamma was so delighted that she took him to the parish fair, and gave him the money to take chances in almost everything there.

"WELL, I do declare," exclaimed Aunt Betitia, on reading about a new cotton-gin exhibited at the New Orleans exposition; "if they ain't got to makin' intoxicatin' lickers out o' cotton!" And she closely inspected her new cotton gown, as though there might be something wrong in wearing it, and added, "Now yew don't suppose one could absorb any of the peaky stuff just wearing cotton, du ye?"—*American Paper*.

TO ALL THE COUNTRY DEBTOR.

Jones was a good fellow, but he was always in debt—"owed everybody," as the saying was. But at last he paid the debt of nature, and was laid away beneath a tombstone bearing the inscription:

"A man he was to all the country dear."

The creditors always insisted that the marble cutter had made a mistake; the inscription should have read:

"A man he was
To all the Country—Dr."

LONDON DAIRYMAN:—"John, the pig looks rather queer. Have they been fed?" John: "Yes, sir." Dairyman: "What did you give them?" John: "As there wasn't nothing else, sir, I gave them the milk that was left in the cans when the men got back from the city." Dairyman: "Great Josephus! What have you done? Run for the doctor."

A BLUNDERBUMB—Kissing the wrong girl. The diver is the man who weights for the tide.

BLANK DESPAIR—Usually that of the lottery ticket investor.

MAN A man thinks he is great, but he is always willing for his wife to be greater when there is horseradish in the family.

A POET sings, "How can I meet my darling?" Well, if you know the old gentleman has gone out, you can go boldly up to the front door, ring the bell, and ask for her.

"Yess," said a butcher, as he watched a dog making off with a big piece of liver. "I believe this is the only business in which a man can lose flesh without growing thin."

"I wonder how the ice cream is in there?" she thoughtfully observed. "Cold, I suppose," was the chilling response, and they continued their walk.

ONE young man said to another: "It is a long way from this world to the next." "Oh, never mind, my dear fellow!" said the other; "You'll have it all down hill."

A SOBER GENTLEMAN wishes to know which is proper to say on leaving a young lady friend after a late call—good-night or good-evening? Never tell a lie, young man—say good-morning.

A GENTLEMAN whose conquests in the female world were numberless at last married. "Now, my deere," said his better half, "I hope, since you are no longer a bachelor, that you will amend your ways." "Madam," says he, "you may depend upon it, this is my last folly."

"How could you crack up his preaching so much?" said a Scotch elder, reproaching a friend whose high laudations had induced his congregation to elect a very unsatisfactory minister. "Oh," said the other, drily, "youth be ready enough to crack him up if you see a chance of getting rid of him—we were.—Ladies' Treasury.

In a country choir, during the sermon, one of the quartet fell asleep. "Now's your chance!" said the organist to the soprano. "See if you can'tie the tenor." "You wouldn't dare duet," said the contralto. "You'll wake hymn up," suggested the bass. "I could make a better pun than that, as sure as my name's Psalm!" remarked the boy that blew the bellows, but he said it wolo that no one quartet (caught it).

THE BULLYING manner of the German students is proverbial, as also their mania for duelling. It was at Heidelberg that a quiet citizen, leaving the cars, said to a swaggering student, "Sir, you are crowding me! Keep back, sir!" The student turned fiercely, and said, in a loud tone, "Do you not like it? Well, sir, I am at your service whenever you please!" "Oh, thank you!" said the traveller. "Your offer is very kind, and yes, may carry my valise to the hotel for me." The student fled amidst shouts of laughter.

THE ART OF BORROWING MONEY.—BUBB DODINGTON was one day walking down Bow-street, at the time when it was well inhabited, and "resorted to by gentry for lodgings," when a borrowing acquaintance rushed from the opposite side of the way, and expressed great delight at meeting him; "for," said he, "I am wonderfully in want of a guinea." Dodington winced, and taking out his purse, showed that he had no more than half-a-guinea. "A thousand thanks!" exclaimed the personander, half forcing the coin between the owner's fingers; "that will do very well for the present," and cleverly changed the subject to a good story. When they had parted, the impudent borrower turned back to Dodington, saying: "By-the-way, when will you pay me that half-guinea?" "Pay you! What do you mean?" "Why, I intended to borrow a guinea of you, and only got half; but I'm not in a hurry for 'other'. Name your own time, only pray keep it."

SOCIETY.

LORDS ARTHUR AND HENRY GROSVENOR, sons of the Duke of Westminster, propose making the grand tour of India during the next cold season.

PRINCE BISMARCK has received from the Czar a life-sized portrait of himself in remembrance of the meeting of the Emperors at Skiernevits.

EXCELLENT sport is expected this season over the Royal preserves in Windsor Great Park; the coverts are well stocked with pheasants and other game. Shooting will not commence until the first week in November, when the Prince of Wales and party are expected to visit the Royal demesne, and be the guests of the Prince and Princess Christian at Cumberland Lodge.

Mrs CUMBERLAND, the thought reader, is going to Germany and Russia in quest of fresh laurels.

THE CROWN PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF AUSTRIA, after leaving Laxenberg, went on a visit of three days to the King and Queen of Roumania, after which they proceeded to Georgia, where bear-hunting commenced. The Prince and Princess afterwards went to Gallo for a short visit before returning to Laxenberg.

THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT has set out for Cashmere, taking the Khyber Pass and other places en route.

THE COUNTESS OF DENBY gave a large garden party at Knowsley Hall on Saturday, the 27th ult., at which upwards of four hundred guests were present.

THE BICENTENARY of Corneille was celebrated by the town of Rouen, where he was born in 1606, and died in 1684.

THE PRIZE won by the Prince of Wales at the regatta held at Bembridge has been forwarded to Marlborough House. It consists of a handsome and artistic trophy in silver, mounted on an alabaster base, with an ebony plinth, and silver shield, on which are emblazoned the flag of the Royal Portman's Corinthian Club and the racing-flag of his Royal Highness.

THE DOWAGER Countess of Darnmore performed the opening ceremony at a bazaar held in the Music Hall, Inverness, recently, in aid of the cathedral, when £200 was realised by the ladies who presided at the seven stalls.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES purpose visiting the Earl and Countess of Dudley at Witney Court during the week preceding Christmas. Their Royal Highnesses are expected to arrive there on the 18th December.

MR ALMA TADEMA, not satisfied with Towneley House, is about to build himself a grander and more beautiful residence in the Grove-road, on the site of the house formerly occupied by Tissot, the artist.

THE EMPRESS Eugenie, while staying in Paris, was the guest of the Duc and Duchesse de Mouchy, at their mansion on the Esplanade des Invalides. The Empress, during her tour, has been accompanied by Mme. Le Breton and M. Pietri.

AT STRATHFIELD SAYE there is a fine flock of pure white Angora goats, the wool of which has for years been used in making the late Duke of Wellington's clothes. His Grace was, we hear, particularly fond of Ardenne mutton, and kept a flock of the sheep of this famous breed in the park at Strathfield Saye.

THE PRINCESSES SOPHIA AND MARGARET, daughters of the Crown Prince and Princess of Germany, concluded their visit to England on the 27th ult., when they left Cowes in the Royal yacht *Ostara* for Frankfort.

STATISTICS.

SOMEbody of a mathematical turn, with nothing better to do, has made the following computation, which is curious, if not essentially correct. He says that a German mile—about five English miles—contains 25,856 feet; a square German mile contains, therefore, 668,500,000 square feet. The superficial area of the Lake of Constance being 83 German square miles, therefore contains 5,682,000,000 square feet. There are living on the surface of the globe at this moment, in round numbers, about 1,430,000,000 human beings. Let every man have four square feet allotted to him, and if the lake were frozen over, the whole human family might find standing room upon its surface. Should the weight prove too great, the ice break, and the whole human race be submerged, it would only raise the level of the lake about six inches.

THE "HARVEST OF THE SEA," so far as it is gathered in Scottish waters, has just been made the subject of an official valuation by the officers of the Fishery Board, by whom it is estimated as amounting to a total sum of £3,286,242. The larger portion—a little over two millions sterling—in derived from the herring fishery, which has for a long period been the most important fishery industry of the country. The haddock is taken in vast quantities by the Scotch fishing boats—513,568 hundredweights were caught during the last twelve months, the estimated value of the catch being £230,693. The Scotch oyster-beds, like those in other localities, have largely fallen off in productiveness; only 6,456 hundreds of oysters—of 120 each—having been gathered from the once productive scalps of Scotland. The total amount of the shellfish taken is set down as amounting to £282,913.

GEMS.

DEFECT in manners is usually defect in fine perceptions. Elegance comes of no breeding, but of birth.

SUPERSTITION is to religion what astrology is to astronomy; a very stupid daughter of a very wise mother.

I DO NOT envy a clergyman's life as an easy life, nor do I envy the clergyman who makes it an easy life.

THESE ARE some who write, talk and think so much about virtue, that they have no time to practice it.

THE LEAVES that give out the sweetest fragrance are those that are the most cruelly crushed; so the hearts of those who have suffered most can feel for others' woes.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CORN OYSTERS.—Grate young sweet corn into a dish, and, to a pint, add one egg; a very small teacupful of flour; half a gill of cream, and a teaspoonful of salt. Mix well together, and fry, dropping it from the spoon, in hot oil.

Egg Pudding.—Four eggs well beaten; four table-spoonfuls of flour; add to the eggs until a smooth mass; then add a pint of milk slowly; a pinch of salt. Beat all smooth together. Put in a well buttered dish, and bake about twenty minutes. Eat with sauce made of butter and sugar beaten together to a cream, flavoured with vanilla.

RUSKS.—One pint of flour, one pint of sugar, one cup of sweet milk, one cup of butter; four eggs, beaten separately; one table-spoonful of cinnamon, one teaspooonful of cloves, one teaspooonful of soda, two teaspooonfuls of cream tartar, or three teaspooonfuls of baking powder. Bake on tins, an inch thick, and when taken from the oven sprinkle with white sugar while hot.

MISCELLANEOUS.

SLUMBER not in the tents of your columns. The world is advancing, advance with it.

THE WINTER in Australia has been unusually severe this season. Snow has fallen in several places, and such intense cold had not been felt in Melbourne for many years. One day the thermometer registered 24 deg., while ice covered all puddles in the streets.

A FRESH room has been opened at the British Museum, containing a most interesting collection of old curiosities. Many of these antiquities were formerly scattered about the Museum, and others hidden away for want of space, but they have now been admirably arranged in one of the galleries originally occupied by the mammals. There are now gathered various relics of British Sovereigns and celebrities, quaint ivories and enamels, ancient clocks and watches, specimens of metal work, and old weapons and armour, dating from the eleventh down to the present century. Charles I.'s tobacco box, Oliver Cromwell's watch, Burat's punch-bowl, a casket made from the mulberry tree in Shakespeare's garden, and given to David Garrick, the Earl of Essex's pocket-dial, and the "Shaw Stone" belonging to the astrologer Dr. Dee, who was charged with bewitching Queen Mary, are a few of the historical mementoes exhibited.

A FANCY bazaar took place recently in the Drill Hall, Thornhill, N.B., in aid of the restoration of Marten parish church. The bazaar was under the special patronage of all the neighbouring families, and was opened by the Earl of Dalkeith, who arrived shortly after noon, accompanied by the Duchess of Buccleuch and a distinguished party. Among the novelties were some work-bags composed of the halves of two fancy handkerchiefs joined to form a square, edged with lace and finished off with a draw-string; also others of cretonne, with covered cardboard sides, a housewife being outside one and a small pocket on the other; some foreign pottery for holding flowers, painted and gilded; hand-sewn, packetts of different patterned hose, travelling caps, pretty cambric aprons, cases, &c. The Drill Hall was well filled during the day.

HUSBAND-PoISONING.—The arrest of over one hundred women in a little district of Hungary, charged with poisoning their husbands, and the conviction of one-third of the number, is startling, but not without a parallel in history. In the seventeenth century an old fortune-teller in Italy carried on the business of selling poisons to such an extent that the attention of the authorities was attracted to her place, and it was discovered that the poisons were supplied to young married women who were desirous of getting rid of their husbands. The courts in those days were little better than Judge Lynch's tribunals, so that it was impossible to say whether their judgements were well founded, but a dozen or more women were hanged, and scores of others were whipped through the streets. About the same time there was a similar outbreak of poisoning in France, which was not controlled until over one hundred prisoners, chiefly women, had been sent to the stake or gallows. Early in the eighteenth century a woman in Naples carried on a large trade in poisons, and is supposed to have been concerned in bringing about the death of over six hundred persons. She was tortured to confess, and then strangled. In every instance of wholesale poisoning, such as that reported from Hungary, there has been found some seller of poisons responsible alike for supplying the means and the suggestion of murders. The poisons used were always slow-acting, frequently administered, and so gradually undermined the health of the victim that their death excited no suspicion until the aggregate grew so large as to cause avertig.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. M. G.—We regret we cannot accept the story.

CUI BONO.—We cannot oblige you.

AMY.—You can claim the month's notice.

W. E. B.—We could not use the poems.

ANXIOUS MOTHER.—The hair is golden auburn.

SAM.—The young man cannot be sued.

CONSTANT READER.—We know of no such institution.

OLD READERS.—The liability does not cease with the mother's marriage.

J. S.—Must consult a history of the war, or a local paper of the time.

PATIENCE.—The portrait is evidently well taken, and represents a pleasant looking, intelligent young fellow.

EDMER.—"Travale," "fam," "Jongh," "Jack." We do not insert advertisements.

AMICUS.—It is not absolutely certain; probably the Romans.

KATE.—It is good writing, but too small to be fashionable.

ANXIOUS ENQUIRER.—The stamp flirtation was given i. No. 1028.

HARRIET.—Try a little coolness and reserve yourself. That will bring him to his senses.

H. SMITH.—We cannot publish tradespeople's addresses in this column.

LADY ELAINE.—The child would be English, unless the parents were domiciled in the foreign country.

QUESTIONER (Leicester).—If you will give us the name of the youth we can perhaps assist you.

M. J. T.—We have not a good recipe for pickling mussels. Perhaps some of our readers can assist you. It is not easy to make a good reliable brine for fish.

EDITH AND MAUD.—The best plan is to have nothing at all to do with such fellows. They are not worthy of a second thought.

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STILL WITH ME.

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And the skies are black and grim,
When no star shines out before me
On the path so rough and dim,
Dear one, thou dost seem to be
In the spirit still with me.

When the shadows round me thicken,
And my life in gloom embrace,
What doth so my bosom quicken
But the sweetness of thy face,
That through all the night I see
Beaming gently down on me!

When these wicked doubts oppress me,
And in treason, woe and pain,
cry out, Oh, heaven, bless me!
If thou canst, bring her again!
There on its bright hills I see
Thy white arms held out to me!

Peace comes softly then to cheer me,
Joy unmorts the pall of night,
And I feel thy presence near me,
Glowing with celestial light,
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Thou art still, I know, with me!

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E. M. G.—We regret we cannot accept the story.

CUI BONO.—We cannot oblige you.

AMY.—You can claim the month's notice.

W. E. B.—We could not use the poems.

ANXIOUS MOTHER.—The hair is golden auburn.

SAM.—The young man cannot be sued.

CONSTANT READER.—We know of no such institution.

OLD READER.—The liability does not cease with the mother's marriage.

J. S.—Must consult a history of the war, or a local paper of the time.

PATIENCE.—The portrait is evidently well taken, and represents a pleasant looking, intelligent young fellow.

EDMEE.—“Travale,” “fam,” “Jough,” “Jack.” We do not insert advertisements.

AMICUS.—It is not absolutely certain; probably the Romans.

KATE.—It is good writing, but too small to be fashionable.

ANXIOUS ENQUIRER.—The stamp flirtation was given i No. 1028.

HARRIET.—Try a little coolness and reserve yourself. That will bring him to his senses.

H. SMITH.—We cannot publish tradespeople's addresses in this column.

LADY ELAINE.—The child would be English, unless the parents were domiciled in the foreign country.

QUESTIONER (Leicester).—If you will give us the name of the youth we can perhaps assist you.

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Is strongly recommended for Softening, Improving, Beautifying, and Preserving the SKIN, and giving it a blooming and charming appearance. It will completely remove tan, sunburn, redness, &c., and by its balsamic and healing qualities render the skin soft, pliable, and free from dryness, &c., clear it from every humour, pimple, or eruption; and by continuing its use only a short time, the skin will become and continue soft and smooth, and the complexion perfectly clear and beautiful.

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is the only palliative in NEURALGIA, RHEUMATISM, GOUT, CANCER, TOOTHACHE, MENINGITIS, &c.

From SYMES & Co., Pharmaceutical Chemists, Medical Hall, Simla, January 5, 1880.

DEAR SIR.—We embrace this opportunity of congratulating you upon the wide-spread reputation this justly esteemed medicine, Dr. J. Collis Brown's Chlorodyne, has earned for itself, not only in Hindostan, but all over the East. As a remedy of general utility, we much question whether a better is imported into the country, and we shall be glad to hear of its finding a place in every Anglo-Indian home. We could multiply instances *ad infinitum* of the extraordinary efficacy of Dr. Collis Browne's Chlorodyne in Diarrhoea and Dysentery, Spasms, Cramps, Neuralgia, the Vomiting of Pregnancy, and as a general sedative, that have occurred under our personal observation during many years. In Cholera Diarrhoea, and even in the more terrible forms of Cholera itself, we have witnessed its surprisingly controlling power. We have never used any other form of this medicine than Collis Browne's, from a firm conviction that it is decidedly the best, and also from a sense of duty we owe to the profession and the public, as we are of opinion that the substitution of any other than Collis Browne's is a *deliberate breach of faith* on the part of the Chemist to prescriber and patient alike.

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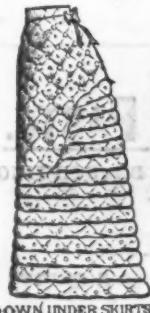
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